

BRUARY 5
LUMIN
watchers
Camilla's
Charles's life

'Jetliner downed by Israel by mistake'

ROME (AFP) — An Israeli fighter destroyed an Italian passenger jet north of Sicily in June 1980, mistaking it for a French transport plane taking enriched uranium to Iraq, according to extracts from a new book published Saturday. But an Israeli embassy spokesman immediately dismissed the report as a "ridiculous story, the fruit of an over-imaginative imagination" of the book's authors, journalists Claudio Gatti and Gail Hammer. Extracts of their book "Quinto Scenario" were published on the front pages of Italian newspapers on Saturday. The mysterious downing of the DC9, with 81 people on board, over the Italian island of Ustica while on a domestic flight between Palermo and Bologna, has often been blamed on a missile being fired in error by a U.S. fighter, believing it was shooting down a Libyan aircraft. According to another earlier hypothesis, a French fighter jet was responsible. But no evidence has ever been produced to back up either theory, although an investigation was launched amid pressure from the victims' families. French and U.S. authorities have strenuously denied any involvement.

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Guerrillas wound 3 pro-Israeli militiamen

MARJAYOUN, Lebanon (R) — Hizbollah guerrillas launched a series of attacks against the Israeli-occupied zone in South Lebanon, wounding three militiamen, security sources said Saturday. The three members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) were wounded when a roadside bomb blew up near their patrol inside the zone late on Friday, they said. Hizbollah guerrillas also fired mortar bombs and heavy machine guns at two SLA posts and assault rifles at an Israeli army patrol near the village of Braachit. There were no injuries in these attacks. Israeli and SLA artillery inside the 15-kilometre enclave shelled a string of villages, causing damage but no casualties.

Cairo trial begins after witness killed

CAIRO (AFP) — The trial of militants accused of trying to kill Prime Minister Atef Sedki opened here Saturday after a gunman shot dead a key prosecution witness. The nine defendants remained silent as proceedings began at Cairo's high military court, Egyptian journalists reported. The trial opened after unidentified gunmen killed automobile dealer Sayed Ahmad Yehia in his showroom north of Cairo overnight Friday (see page 2). A lawyer specialising in trial of militants said Mr. Yehia's death would have little impact on the outcome of the proceedings, which he alleged were determined in advance. Journalists for foreign news organisations were banned from the courtroom.

Iran launches women-only taxis

TEHRAN (AFP) — The Iranian taxi company has set aside 300 taxis to cater exclusively for women, as part of moves to segregate men and women according to Islamic principles, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. The experimental plan went into effect on Saturday in the Iranian capital, and has already been welcomed by Iranian women, who often resent being squeezed between male passengers to small taxis, IRNA said. The few taxis, all with male drivers, have a red and white tag displayed on their windows for distinction. Men and women have already been segregated in buses, with women riding the rear half of vehicle.

Red Cross visits Kuwait held in Iraq

KUWAIT (R) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Saturday its officials had visited a Kuwaiti detainee held in an Iraqi prison for illegal entry. ICRC official Jean-Philippe Lavyer said by telephone colleagues stationed in Baghdad had visited Falaah Mohammed Al Rasbidi in Abu Ghraib prison near the Iraqi capital in late January and found him in good health. "The ICRC will continue its efforts to protect and assist him (Rashidi) and we will also facilitate his contacts with his family in Kuwait," Mr. Lavyer said. Kuwait-based Lavyer said Mr. Rashidi was not one of the hundreds of Kuwaitis the emirate says are still held by Baghdad following detention during Iraq's 1990-91 occupation. Iraq denies it still holds any Kuwaitis arrested then.

Bahrain's emir holds talks with Hoar

MANAMA (R) — Bahraini Emir Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa held talks Saturday with a U.S. general on boosting military cooperation between the two countries. The Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency said Sheikh Isa also reviewed latest Gulf developments with General Joseph Hoar, commander in chief of the U.S. Central Command. It gave no further details. Bahrain signed military cooperation agreements last month with the United States and Britain.

Deputies rally behind Malhas, demand probe

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Deputies Saturday turned the tables in favour of Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas on the second day of a special session that started off with severe criticism of Dr. Malhas for "failing" to substantiate his charges that much of food and medicine that reaches the market is unfit for consumption.

Sixteen out of 19 deputies who took the floor urged support for Dr. Malhas while one went against him and two others projected neutral positions but called for a thorough investigation of his allegations, which appeared in a weekly tabloid over two weeks ago.

Many deputies unleashed severe criticism against the government for its expressed support for Dr. Malhas while others criticised fellow parliamentarians for "turning" (Dr. Malhas) into a suspect "instead of supporting him."

The majority of lawmakers demanded that the general prosecutor be entrusted with investigating the charges, which landed the government in the biggest political crisis since it won the confidence of the House in December.

The 16-member Islamic Action Front (IAF) and deputies Toufan Faisal and Theeb Abdullah joined Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dughmi in urging the House to withdraw confidence from the government for what some of them called its inability to deal properly with the corruption charges raised by Dr. Malhas.

Lawmaker Abdullah Akhu Irshideh said that there was an obvious need for a major reshuffle in the government so that it could have a stronger parliamentary base and thus have a more efficient cooperation between legislative and executive authorities.

The IAF, Mr. Dughmi and Ms. Faisal were among the 29 deputies who withheld confidence from the government in December. Mr. Abdullah was absent when the vote was taken and Mr. Akhu Irshideh was among the 41 lawmakers who voted in favour of the government.

The IAF deputies "blamed" Dr. Malhas for "watering down" the original charges he made in his press interview when he spoke on the issue few days later on Jordan Television and in his speech to the House on Wednesday, saying that pressure must have been applied on him.

But they said they agreed with him that there was corruption in the country and that unfit food reaches the market and that some food merchants applied pressure to have their sub-standard goods approved for sale.

In a speech read on behalf of the bloc by Hamzeh Mansour, the IAF also agreed with the minister that there was a deficiency in legislation governing the entry of food and medicine into the market and that exorbitant profits were being made on drugs.

After adding to the list of cases in which Dr. Malhas said unfit shipments of milk, meat, cheese, wheat were allowed into the market, the IAF demanded answers to a set of questions in light of which it said the House will be able to define its position on the government.

The IAF wanted to know whether the government had responded to any reform programmes Dr. Malhas might have presented to the government before he made his press statements, whether people in the Ministry of Health resisted his attempts for reform and whether he could substantiate charges that employees in charge of the drug control department had interests that could conflict with their work.

The IAF also raised questions on a number of issues that would show the extent to which measures taken to guarantee the safety of medicines are sufficient and if unfit medicines were responsible for the death of some people at various hospitals in the Kingdom.

Before urging the House to withhold confidence from the government if it does not resign, the IAF demanded to know why the government responded with "negativity" (Continued on page 5)

Peres does not see PLO accord this week

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Saturday that he did not expect to wrap up an agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) this week on implementing Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Peres also played down reports of a rift between him and Israeli army commanders who allegedly criticised him for making too many concessions to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on security issues. The reports said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was siding with the generals.

"There is no basis to this," Mr. Peres told Israeli army radio in an interview from New York. "The things we (Peres and Arafat) agreed on were agreed on after consultations with the prime minister."

Mr. Peres said he and Mr. Rabin differ occasionally, but only proceed in the peace negotiations once they reach common ground. "I believe

that Mr. Rabin as myself do understand in depth that a divided leadership may be a catastrophe for peace and for the country," Mr. Peres said on Israel Radio.

Asked whether an implementation agreement could be signed at the upcoming meeting, Mr. Peres said: "I doubt it because we still have a lot of work to do. Even after you agree on the principles. There is debate over formulating them."

In Cairo, PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said that Israel was deliberately dragging its feet over talks about self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

The PLO had wanted the Israelis to come to negotiate in Cairo this week but the Israelis did not respond, he told reporters after a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

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Yemeni mediators meet

SANAA (R) — Yemen's feuding political parties were meeting Saturday in a new effort to iron out differences that have delayed ratification of a peace accord to end their dispute.

An all-party committee, which reached agreement last month on political, economic, military and administrative reforms, was meeting in the capital Sanaa, said the committee's spokesman Ahmad Jaber Afif.

The northern-based General Peoples Congress (GPC) of President Ali Abdullah Saleh said on Thursday that a scheduled signing ceremony in Jordan next week was delayed because of new conditions set by its southern rival, the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP).

Political sources said the YSP, led by estranged Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh, wanted guarantees ensuring the

Government artillery pounded rebel positions around the Kit River area, south of Juba, on Friday, aid workers said.

Rebel sources said that unidentified attackers, allegedly renegade SPLA fighters who had joined the government side, were at the same time attacking south of Kit.

Khartoum's forces were clearly trying to make a push for the SPLA-held town of Nimule on the frontier with Uganda in an effort to cut the rebels' main military and food supply line.

Some 100,000 southerners displaced by the decade-long war in this area, known as the "Triple A" because of the camps of Ame, Aswa and Atepi, have panicked and were fleeing towards Uganda, aid workers said.

Government warplanes joined the offensive drawing strong condemnation from Washington.

The death toll from the bombings of displaced people's camps Friday around Maridi and Arapi, was still unknown, said David Shinn, the State Department's East Africa director.

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CARNAGE: Wounded and dead are unloaded from United Nations armoured personnel carriers at a U.N. hospital in Sarajevo after a Serbian mortar shell fell on a crowded marketplace on Sunday (see page 8). Late reports said nearly 70 people were killed and 200 injured (AFP photo)

Israeli soldiers kill two Palestinians amid chaos

OCCUPIED GAZA (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers killed two Palestinians in the occupied territories on Saturday, one of them an 11-year-old boy returning from school, Palestinian and Israeli sources said.

Soldiers shot dead the youngster, Ayman Al Sour, in front of a United Nations relief office in the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, Palestinian witnesses and U.N. workers said.

The witnesses said the boy was coming home from school and was shot in the chest from a distance of 120 metres, still carrying his schoolbag. There had been no class in the area, the witnesses said.

Troops tried to take the boy's body from relatives, who evaded the soldiers by running with it through the twisting alleys of the refugee camp, the reporters said.

Hundreds of people attended the boy's funeral in the camp, chanting slogans against the peace deal between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

In the West Bank village of Balaa, soldiers killed Khiri

Abdul Jaber Yousef Abdullah, 30, described by villagers as "mentally deranged." An army spokeswoman said the incident happened during a search for wanted activists.

"Abdullah tried to escape from an army roadblock while the village was under curfew," she said. "The soldiers called on him to stop and when he didn't respond they shot at him. He was badly wounded and died of his wounds."

The spokeswoman said Mr. Abdullah was not among those wanted by the army.

The latest bloodshed came on the second day of a three-day strike called in Gaza after soldiers on Thursday killed an activist in the Fateh Hawks, a group affiliated to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

A supporter of the Hamas movement was killed in Gaza on Friday when trying to settle a quarrel between armed militants and a family in Rafah refugee camp, Palestinian sources said.

Also Saturday, Ayman Zaout died of wounds he sustained during the shootout with undercover troops Thurs-

day in Gaza's Rafah refugee camp. Arab reporters said Mr. Zaout belonged to the Fateh Hawks.

The leader of a Hawks breakaway faction in Rafah, Salim Muwafi, was killed in Thursday's shootout.

The stone-throwing clash in Jabaliya erupted as a protest over Mr. Muwafi's killing.

Saturday deaths brought to 1,208 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops or civilians since the December 1987 start of the uprising against occupation. Among those killed were 243 children age 16 or younger, according to the Israeli human rights group B'tselem.

Meanwhile, there were growing signs of chaos and infighting as Gaza awaited the outcome of the Israel-PLO negotiations on implementing Palestinian autonomy.

In Rafah, a bystander was killed by Friday evening during clashes between a Fateh official and members of a clan demanding payment for a machine gun. Arab reporters

(Continued on page 5)

Sudan reportedly starts offensive against rebels

NAIROBI (Agencies) — The Sudanese government has launched a huge ground and air offensive against southern rebels, sending 100,000 refugees fleeing for their lives, aid workers and diplomats said on Saturday.

Rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and government troops were locked in bitter fighting across the south. Relief organisations, trying to feed some two million hungry people, were having to curtail aid deliveries, the sources said.

Government artillery pounded rebel positions around the Kit River area, south of Juba, on Friday, aid workers said.

Rebel sources said that unidentified attackers, allegedly renegade SPLA fighters who had joined the government side, were at the same time attacking south of Kit.

Khartoum's forces were clearly trying to make a push for the SPLA-held town of Nimule on the frontier with Uganda in an effort to cut the rebels' main military and food supply line.

Some 100,000 southerners displaced by the decade-long war in this area, known as the "Triple A" because of the camps of Ame, Aswa and Atepi, have panicked and were fleeing towards Uganda, aid workers said.

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Tunis minister quits rights forum

TUNIS (R) — A cabinet minister stormed out of a congress of Tunisia Human Rights League on Saturday and the movement's president announced he was relinquishing his job after a two-year row with the state. League President Moncef Marzouki announced he was quitting after a prolonged campaign for the independence of one of North Africa's most active campaign groups. The dramatic incidents happened during debate on whether the organisation should abide by a 1992 law obliging the league to open up its membership. Many in the group interpreted the law as a way to dilute the league's effectiveness in campaigning for human rights. Members decided to disband rather than obey. The government only allowed the movement to resume activities in mid-1993, even then only to prepare for the congress and adapt itself to the new law.

Cabinet passes new rules on food, medicine

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday approved four new sets of regulations on food safety, drug testing, private hospitals and reorganisation of the Health Ministry's internal administration.

According to a Cabinet statement issued following a regular session, the food safety regulations will be in implementation of the 1971 public health law, which has provisions for testing foodstuffs.

The regulations call for testing foodstuffs, determining their fitness for human consumption and setting conditions for their preservation.

The statement said the regulations on testing drugs stipulate that the Health Ministry's drug control laboratory will conduct tests on samples of drugs manufactured in Jordan or abroad. No medicine will be allowed to be marketed in Jordan unless they clear the laboratory tests.

The ministry did not charge any fees on such tests so far but fees will be collected from now on.

The regulations on private hospitals, the statement said, call for fees for licensing new hospitals.

The fourth set of regulations authorises the minister to appoint two assistants to the directors general of health departments and hospital directors on his own discretion.

Aqaba gets lab

The Aqaba Department of Health has opened a laboratory for testing food supplies imported to Jordan via the port of Aqaba. The department's director, Abdul Rahman Al Shuweikini, said the laboratory, which has started operating, was supplied with advanced laboratory equipment and qualified personnel.

Aziz meets Ekeus amid unclear signs

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz met here Saturday with Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission to disarm Iraq (UNSCOM), Iraqi sources said.

Mr. Ekeus, who arrived Wednesday in Baghdad, was following up on talks with officials on the setting up of a long-term monitoring mechanism of Iraq's weapons programmes.

Prior to his meeting with Mr. Aziz, Mr. Ekeus told journalists the discussions had been "serious, professional and business-like."

Asked whether he was still hopeful on their outcome, he replied: "Yes, I have not changed my position."

Since his arrival, Mr. Ekeus has held talks with Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahhaf and General Amer Rashid, head of the Military Industrialisation Organisation.

Prodded further on whether he had any problems with the Iraqis, he said: "We are continuing our talks."

U.N. sources in Baghdad said Mr. Ekeus was to hold a

final round of meetings with Iraqi officials Saturday night.

The government newspaper, Al Jumhuriya, in a front-page, open letter, urged Mr. Ekeus to help ease the suffering of Iraqi people caused by U.N. sanctions.

"You will not starve if you raise your voice and say 'enough is enough' and the U.N. should immediately issue a resolution to lift the sanctions," it said.

A newspaper published by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday blasted the envoy for what it said were his contradictory remarks.

"He, the accused, is unsatisfied in Manama and optimistic in Baghdad," the newspaper Babel said.

The sanctions imposed by the United Nations over Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait will not be lifted until the Security Council is satisfied that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction are destroyed and its arms industry is under international surveillance.

Mr. Ekeus is trying to organise the mechanics of long-term monitoring.

Dr. Faisal Hamad, F.R.C.C.
American Board of Internal Medicine
American Board of Cardiology
Former cardiologist at Texas Heart Institute in Houston
Announces the opening of his
cardiology clinic in Amman
5th Circle, near Arab Centre for Heart and Surgery
Phone 862202

He also indirectly criticised the United States and other nations for cutting and running when things got tough.

Kuwaiti appeals court to review Farhat case

CASABLANCA MOSQUE: Moroccans walk on the esplanade of a new mosque built in Casablanca. The mosque opened its door on Friday, one week before the beginning of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. The new mosque is one of the biggest in the Arab World, cost more than \$500 million (AFP photo)

Gunmen kill witness in Sedki bomb trial

25. It is one of the militant groups seeking to overthrow Egypt's secular government and install strict Islamic rule.

Mr. Yehia identified Sayed Salah Suleiman as the man who bought a vehicle from him

Unlike the larger group Gamaa Al Islamiyah, which has mostly attacked the security forces, Jihad has concentrated on trying to kill prominent politicians.

Murders terrify city in southeast Turkey

"People are getting killed here and we don't know who is doing it," said Sabri Gönular, deputy chairman of the Diyarbakir branch of the opposition Motherland Party. "I leave home in the morn-

"The state tries to treat us as if we were an illegal organisation," said a local DEP official. "But it is not."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel chooses new head of women's corps

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's military on Friday chose a new commander for its women's corps, a post that often draws fire from women's groups who see it as a symbol of the limited opportunity for women in the highest ranks of the armed forces. Colonel Yisraela Oron, 42, will be promoted to the rank of brigadier general and will officially take charge of the army's female soldiers in the next few months, an army statement said. Col. Oron was drafted into the army in 1970 and served in various positions in the women's corps, including commander of the main basic training base for women. She is replacing Brig. Gen. Yehudit Ben-Natan who told the Associated Press she intended to retire when her term was up, since "I have nowhere else to go." Gen. Ben-Natan's request for a transfer to the army's general staff was reportedly rejected. Women, drafted at 18 for two years of service, are barred from doing combat duty which prevents them from rising to high-level positions that require battle experience. There have been frequent complaints that women are assigned menial tasks like making coffee and are subject to harassment by male superior officers. The women's corps, which accounts for nearly half of the 176,000 standing military, is known by its Hebrew acronym, CHEN, which is also Hebrew for "beauty."

Angola expels 4 Israelis for running militia

TEL AVIV (AP) — Angola expelled 211 foreigners, including four Israelis. In December for running a private army and for smuggling diamonds to finance the rebel movement, Israel Radio reported Friday. One of the Israelis headed a licensed security firm, but was expelled when the Angolan Interior Ministry discovered he was carrying out operations reserved for the security forces, the radio quoted unidentified ministry officials as saying. The other foreigners, including South Africans, Portuguese, and nationals of various Arab states, were all employees of the security firm. The radio did not name any of the foreigners. The firm was authorised to handle only personal security services, the radio said, but had purchased 500 assault rifles and submachineguns. In addition, the Israeli who headed the firm smuggled diamonds out of Angola and laundered the proceeds through a Brussels bank to finance the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). UNITA, once a guerrilla movement confined to Angola's bush, has occupied more than half the Southern African nation since accusing the government of rigging multi-party elections in Sept. 1992. The rebels have seized almost complete control of Angola's diamond fields, potentially the world's second-most productive with an estimated yield of \$200 million per year. The radio noted that the Angolan government received "limited security assistance" from Israel as part of a deal to renew ties with the Jewish state last year. The revelation came a day after the news that enemies of the regime in Congo are offering Israeli mercenaries \$15 million to help them overthrow the government, which is to be aided by Israeli military advisers.

Denmark to pull diplomats out of Algeria

COPENHAGEN (AP) — Denmark is pulling its ambassador and three other diplomats out of Algeria next week, because of recent killings of foreigners by militants, the Foreign Ministry said Friday. The embassy in Algiers will remain open, with Algerian staff and one Danish office clerk without diplomatic status, a senior Foreign Ministry official said. "The reason for this is the insecure situation which Western people face in Algeria," he said, refusing to be identified in line with civil service practice. At least 27 foreigners have been killed since late September as the militants target those whose skills and investment are important to the economy. The Danish diplomats will temporarily move to Tunis. FLS Industries, a Danish group building a concrete plant in eastern Algeria, has 20 employees in the country, but there was no announcement that they would leave.

4 killed in building collapse

KHARTOUM (AP) — Four people were killed and seven injured when a building collapsed during construction in downtown Khartoum, a government newspaper said. The victims were construction workers, said the daily Al Sudan Al Hadith. It said 14 other workers were missing after the collapse of the two-storey structure Thursday. It was unclear if some of those were later rescued. The cause of the collapse was under investigation, but one report said it resulted from too much sand being mixed in the cement.

Greece asks Iran to exert influence on Bosnia

ATHENS (AP) — Greece's foreign minister, Carolos Papoulias, Friday asked Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati to exert his influence on the Bosnian government for it to accept a European Union (EU) peace plan dividing its war-torn country. Mr. Velayati said that he would brief Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, but did not specify whether his country was happy with the EU plan. Iran has been a major supporter of the mainly-Muslim Bosnian government in its war against rebel Serbs and Croats. Greece currently holds the EU's six-month rotating presidency and has been trying to garner support for the stalled peace talks in Geneva. "I asked the minister to unite his efforts with those of the European Union to find a solution. And he promised this to me. I am referring to the good relations between Tehran and Mr. Izetbegovic," Mr. Papoulias said after a two-hour meeting with Mr. Velayati.

Rabin to visit Portugal on Feb. 23

LISBON (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will visit Portugal on Feb. 23 to discuss the Middle East peace process and bilateral issues, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. Mr. Rabin, who will be visiting Portugal for the first time as Israeli prime minister, will meet President Mario Soares and Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva, the spokesman added.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30
 Feature Film: "Un Txi La Nuit"
 19:00 News in French
 19:15 Feature Sur
 19:30 News in Hebrew
 20:00 News in Arabic
 20:30 You Bet Your Life
 21:10 Out of the Past
 22:00 News in English
 22:30 Father and Son
 23:10 The Golden Palace

PRAYER TIMES

05:04 Fajr
 06:23 (Sunrise)
 11:49 Dhuhr
 14:49 Asr
 17:17 Maghrib
 18:34 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swidieh,
 Tel. 510740
 Arabians of God Church, Tel.
 632765.
 St. Joseph Church 634590.
 Church of the Annunciation Tel.
 637440.
 De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
 Tel. 627636

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
 623541.
 Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.
 628543.
 Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
 717131.
 Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
 717561.
 St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717751.
 Armenian International Church Tel.
 655268.
 Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
 824328.
 Semitic-speaking Evangelical Com-
 munion Tel. 684195
 The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
 Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
 The Evangelical Local Church in Am-
 man Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of
 Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise with winds
 northwesterly moderate, be-
 coming moderate. In Aqaba, wind
 will be northerly moderate and seas
 calm.

Min./Max. temp.	2 / 14
Amman	8 / 22
Jericho	zero / 16
Jordan Valley	7 / 21

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 12, Aqaba 20 Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.	Khalifeh pharmacy 985417	Electric Power Company 636381	lbn Al Nafeen Hospital 103414
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	EMERGENCIES	RJ Flight Information 08-53200	AQABA:
NIGHT DUTY	Food Control Centre 637111	Qacaa Alla Intl. Airport 08-53200	Princess Haya Hospital (01)0313
AMMAN:	Civil Defence Department 661111	FORTS	FOR THE TRAVELLER
Dr. Mukhees Mazraha 830425	Rescue 630341	QUEEN ALIA	INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 831039	Civil Defence Emergency 199	ARRIVALS	<i>This information is supplied by RJ Jordanian (RJ) information department at Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where should always be verified.</i>
Dr. Mohammad Al Issah 752971	Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637771	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
Dr. Mohammad Al Nahawi 819213	Fire Brigade 891228	06:15 Bangkok	
Firas pharmacy 661912	Blood Bank 775121	06:35 Damascus	
Al Azzam pharmacy 677830	Highway Police 843402	06:50 Jeddah	
Al Azzam pharmacy 637055	Traffic Police 896390	07:00 Beirut	
Nairomkh pharmacy 637652	Public Security Department 63021	10:20 Doha, Bahrain	
Al Salam pharmacy 663730	Hotel Complaints 605800	16:55 Cairo	
Yacoub pharmacy 644945	Price Complaints 661176	17:25 Paris, Brussels	
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660	Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467	17:50 New Amsterdam	
Naijroshi pharmacy 626762	Amman Municipality Complaints 787111	19:30 London, Athens	
Najbi pharmacy 647632	Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121	20:15 Vienna	
	Overseas Calls 010230		
	Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101		
IRBID:	Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101		
Dr. M. thammad Al Zo'bi (—)	Jordan Television 773111		
Alquds pharmacy (—)	Radio Jordan 774111		
	Water Authority 680100		
ZARQA:	Jordan Electricity Authority 815615		
Dr. Yusuf Hazzeleh 988075			

20:25	Frankfurt (RJ)	
21:00	Rome (RJ)	
21:35	Vienna (RJ)	
22:00	Madrid (RJ)	
23:00	Aqaba (RJ)	
Other Flights (Terminal 2)		
11:00	Damascus (AZ)	
12:25	Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)	
14:35	Moscow (SU)	
19:40	Larnaca (CY)	
19:45	Beirut (AE)	
20:05	Cairo (MS)	
22:20	Istanbul (TA)	
DEPARTURES		
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights		
(Terminal 1)		
06:00	Beirut (RJ)	
10:15	Frankfurt (RJ)	
11:15	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)	
11:30	Rome (RJ)	
11:35	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	
12:30	Vienna (add) (RJ)	
12:40	Athens, Vienna (RJ)	
20:30	Cairo (RJ)	
20:35	Jeddah (RJ)	
20:45	Aqaba (RJ)	
20:45	Damascus (RJ)	
21:00	Riyadh (RJ)	
21:25	New Delhi (RJ)	
21:40	Aqaba (RJ)	
22:40	Aqaba (RJ)	
22:30	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)	
09:30	Bangkok (RJ)	
23:30	Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)	
	Sana'a (RJ)	
Other Flights (Terminal 2)		
12:10	Rome (AZ)	
12:30	Doha, Bahrain (GF)	
18:05	Moscow (SU)	
20:25	Larnaca (CY)	
20:35	Cairo (MS)	
MARKET PRICES		
<i>Uppest/lowest price in file per kg.</i>		
Apple	600	
Banana	600	
Banana (Mukamasar)	600	
Cabbage	30/35	
Carrot	170/180	
Cauliflower	50	
Celerosette	260/280	
Cucumber (large)	150/160	
Cucumber (small)	250/180	
Eggplant	160/180	
Garic	900/950	
Grave Fruit	200/250	
Green beans	160/180	
Lemon	140/160	
Pepper (large)	140/180	
Pepper (small)	240/160	
Olives (green)	700/900	
Orange	350/380	
Onion (dry)	220/150	
Onion (green)	220/150	
Pepper (hot)	240/170	
Pepper (sweet)	260/230	
Potato	120/140	
Radish	160/180	
Tomato	120/150	
Splach	120/150	

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Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday holds a press briefing to announce the fourth charity campaign planned by the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development during Ramadan (Petra photo)

QAF plans 4th charity drive

AMMAN (Petra) — For the fourth consecutive year, the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) will launch a charity campaign involving volunteers and scouts during the month of Ramadan. Her Royal Highness Princess Basma announced Saturday.

Addressing a press briefing, the princess, who is also QAF honorary chairperson, said that this year the funds raised will target three major areas of need: Rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for heads of needy families; direct in-kind assistance to needy families suffering from malnutrition and poor health; and financial aid to excellent underprivileged students so that they may continue their education at colleges and universities.

Noting that QAF gives priority to rehabilitation programmes, the Princess said that by providing training to the needy, QAF hopes to gradually transform the concept of direct aid into actual development which would enable such families to ensure a steady income for themselves.

With 45 centres around the country dedicated to helping the needy QAF realises the extent of poverty resulting from unemployment and other causes, as well as the social and economic conditions of needy families, said Princess Basma.

"We do not claim that through the charity campaigns we will find a solution to poverty in Jordan, but we feel we are committed by our faith to ensure solidarity among the people in the coming holy month," stressed the Princess.

The success of the charity campaign in the past three years, she said, has encouraged QAF to continue its fund-raising efforts and in-kind contributions to the needy.

Last year's campaign, said Princess Basma, resulted in JD 40,000 collected and distributed to beneficiaries by QAF offices.

The contributions consisted of in-kind assistance to 8,260 families, medical care and drugs for 958 families, and surgical operations and the purchase of medical equipment, the Princess said.

She added that some aid went to handicapped children and part of the donations were used to purchase sheep for families in rural regions, as well as to finance sewing and knitting training courses and small stores for heads of families.

QAF this year also plans to grant loans to help families start their own income-generating projects, and farming equipment will be offered to farmers, said Princess Basma.

Through this campaign, added the princess, QAF hopes to foster the concept of social solidarity during Ramadan when people are expected to give alms to the poor.

Indian officials here to promote tourism

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Glimpses from the "land of all seasons," as the Indians call their country, were presented to a gathering of Jordanian officials and travel agents Saturday by Indian officials trying to promote tourism to the subcontinent.

Attended by visiting Indian Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation Gulam Nabi Azad and his Jordanian counterpart Mohammad Adwan, the presentation centred around an audio-visual show of what India holds in store for the potential tourist.

Ranging from the backwaters of southern India to the landmarks of India to the north, the varying cultures and languages of the country of nearly 900 million people and the centuries-old monuments were presented to the accompaniment of Indian music at the nearly one-hour event.

It was the first time that the Indian Tourism Development Corporation, a state-owned agency, came to Jordan with an emphasis on developing Jordanian tourism to India and adding a new "land of all seasons" dimension to the catchy description that it gives to the country.

Indian travel agents in the delegation accompanying Mr. Azad also spoke of possibilities of tourism packages for Indians interested in visiting Jordan.

Also mentioned were the possibilities of developing joint tourism packages which offer both countries to visitors from Europe.

During a short exchange of views after the presentation, both sides agreed to study possibilities further and exchange visits.

The holy land is a regular destination of the large Christian population of India while Muslims use, Royal Jordanian to fly through Amman to Jeddah en route to Mecca and Medina to perform Haj.

Mr. Azad arrived Friday on an official visit. He held formal talks with Dr. Adwan Saturday.

His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali are expected to meet with Mr. Azad Sunday for a general review of Jordanian-Indian relations.

Mr. Azad was the "minister in waiting" for Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor during their visit to India in 1988.

Senior officials of Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national carrier, are also scheduled to hold talks with Mr. Azad on civil aviation links between India and Jordan.

RJ operates regular flights to Delhi and Calcutta. Air India, the Indian flag carrier, does not fly to Amman, and officials say that the airline's priorities were in Europe and North America as well as the Gulf states.



Minister of Tourism Mohammad Adwan Saturday discusses bilateral tourism relations with his Indian counterpart Gulam Nabi Azad (in light suit) (Petra photo)

Business group to urge Australians to import more from Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) Saturday said it plans to urge the concerned Australian authorities to arrange for more Jordanian imports, especially phosphate and potash, in an effort to adjust the balance of trade which is currently in favour of Australia.

The JBA is arranging a general meeting Sunday evening between JBA members and an Australian delegation, due to arrive in Amman Sunday, to discuss prospects of increased trade and economic cooperation, said a JBA statement.

Jordanian business persons will urge the delegation, led by Henry Cowan, deputy prime minister and minister of commerce and trade exchange of Western Australia, to import Jordanian industrial products, said the statement.

The meeting which will be held at the Amman Philadelphia Hotel, is part of JBA programme aimed at stimulating economic and trade links with other countries.

Similar meetings have been organised by the JBA with visitors and government officials from Canada, the United States as well as Australia, said the statement.

According to the JBA statement Jordan's imports from Australia rose from JD 1.8 million in 1989 to JD 25.4 million in 1991, but dropped to JD 15.3 million in 1992. Such imports included live sheep, frozen meat, cheese and honey as well as cereals, lubricating oil, raw aluminium and medical equipment.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, Saturday said that Mr. Cowan will spend several days in the Kingdom and meet with officials from the public and private sectors to discuss economic and trade relations.

Mr. Cowan's talks are considered a follow-up to a session he held in Jordan during a visit last year, Petra said.

The agency said that a joint Jordanian-Australian committee has been working to increase trade exchanges between the two countries and concentrating on launching joint ventures in the Kingdom.

5 deputies launch move for criminal inquiry into food, medicine allegations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Five members of the Lower House of Parliament Saturday sent a memo to the Amman prosecutor general officially requesting him to investigate statements by Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas alleging that there were violations of the laws by some food merchants.

The deputies — Abdul Karim Al Dughmi, Toujan Faisal, Bassam Haddadin, Khalik Haddadin and Mustafa Shneikat — said Dr. Malhas had told the Shihan Arab weekly that merchants were selling food unfit for human consumption.

They said that these and other charges made in the interview "are violations of the Penal Code, the Public Health Law and other laws, and should prompt the concerned authorities to conduct the necessary investigations and refer (suspects) to the proper courts."

The minister, they said, is a civil servant whose duty includes implementing the Penal Code. Therefore, he should inform the prosecutor-general's office of any crime that he knows of, they said.

The five deputies also demanded that the prosecutor general summon the two reporters who conducted the Shihan interview — Khaled Al Shboul and Ruba Karasneh — as well as the minister for investigations.

Dr. Malhas said in the interview with Shihan that there was a deficiency in laws governing the sales of food and drugs and charged that some drug and food importers were reselling regulations that the Ministry of Health had introduced.

In another development, Deputy Dughmi sent another memo to the prosecutor general officially requesting him to investigate a statement sent to the Lower House by the president of the Jordan Dentists Association, Mohammad Obeidat on Jan. 29.

Mr. Dughmi said some medicine and materials used by dentists were brought into the Kingdom without any kind of control, in a manner violating Jordanian law.

He said, quoting Dr. Obeidat's statement that some materials that cause cancer were still used by dentists in Jordan.

According to Dr. Obeidat's statement, materials used by dentists to fill cavities do not undergo any kind of laboratory tests to check whether they are harmless or not.

"These materials are much more dangerous than medicine because they stay in the mouth for a period of more than 20 years, while a pill would be discharged from the human body after a period of time," Dr. Obeidat said in his statement, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times.

Dr. Obeidat also said that a teacher at the University of Jordan's Faculty of Dentistry was treating patients at the faculty's clinic although he is not registered at the association.

The teacher, Maher Mohammad Jarbawi, had earlier taken the examination conducted by the Ministry of Health for beginning doctors, but failed after the association sent a complaint about him to the Ministry of Health and the president of the University of Jordan in April 1993, Dr. Obeidat said.

Mr. Dughmi attached Dr. Obeidat's statement which was sent to the Lower House of Parliament to his memo and called on the prosecutor general to use Dr. Obeidat's testimony in the investigation.

Iran to cut embassy staff to 9

AMMAN (Agencies) — Iran, responding to Jordanian demands, has agreed to cut the number of its embassy staff in the Kingdom from 40 to nine, officials said Saturday.

Under an accord reached after months of negotiation, Iran would only keep five of its 20 diplomats, including Ambassador Ahmad Dastmalchian, and four of its 20 Iranian administrative staffers in Amman, they said.

Jordan, which restored ties with Iran in 1991 after an 11-year break, has an ambassador, another diplomat and three locally-hired administrators in its embassy in Tehran.

Both countries have insisted the staff reduction should not affect growing political, economic and trade ties.

"On the contrary, this would help develop Jordanian-Iranian relations in a quiet and gradual manner that takes into consideration the interests of both countries," a top Jordanian government official, who asked for anonymity, told Reuters.

The Iranian embassy, which reopened in Amman in 1992, announced in a statement on Friday that it was cutting its staff as a purely organisational measure.

The statement was prompted by a newspaper article that suggested Iran might be behind the killing of a Jordanian diplomat in Beirut last week.

"We want to affirm that close relations between the two brotherly countries in which the spirit of brotherliness and affection are proceeding ahead," said the embassy statement.



REHABILITATION THROUGH SPORTS: Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid Saturday opens a sports seminar held at Nazek Al Hariri Special Education Centre for social workers dealing with the mentally handicapped. Prince Ra'd called on the social workers to continue work towards physically and psychologically rehabilitating the mentally handicapped so that they may contribute in productive roles in society. Centre Director Yasser Salem said the seminar includes lectures and practical training and demonstrations at the University of Jordan and the Orthodox Club sports courts. He said 37 social workers representing 24 special education centres in Amman, Zarqa, Salt, Madaba, Baqa and Jerash are participating in the five-day seminar (Petra photo)

5 persons die in separate incidents

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Five people died in separate incidents in the Kingdom last weekend.

On Friday evening, one man was killed and 14 people were injured in a road accident on the Ruweished road, according to police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

Obeidat N. Ali 50, an Iraqi national, was killed when the bus he was driving collided with a trailer bearing Iraqi tags and driven by Abdullah Dakhil, 33. The bus driver was rushed to Ruweished Hospital, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

The injured were taken to the same hospital and were all reported in fair and good condition, CDD reports said.

Traffic officials who investigated the accident, which took place at 11:30 p.m., said the bus driver was speeding.

In Shouneil, a 10-year-old child drowned in the King Abdullah Canal. Ali Atayeh accidentally fell in the canal while attempting to drink from it, the boy's father told police.

Mr. Atayeh said his son started calling for help when he fell in the canal, but no one was able to save the youngster.

Alt was rushed to Mou'az Bin Jabal Hospital, but the attending physician said the boy died because the amount of water he swallowed caused his heart and respiratory system to stop functioning.

Also Friday, a 35-year-old man died of smoke inhalation in Irbid, according to police reports. Tareq M. Rashwan was the third person to die of asphyxiation while sleeping in the last week.

Mr. Rashwan was discovered by his employer, Mohammad Shehab, who told police he went to check on Mr. Rashwan and found him dead in his room with a kerosene stove still lit.

Salt police are investigating the death of an 11-year-old boy who was found hanged in the backyard of his house.

The father of the boy told police that his daughter found her brother hanged with a rope and tried to rescue him by cutting the rope with a knife, but the child was already dead.

The boy's body was taken to Al Hussein Hospital for examination. Police reports gave no further details.

Also Friday, a 30-year-old man was found dead in his car of gunshot wounds in the yard of the Italian Hospital in Amman, police reports said.

Fouad S. Abdullah was found dead in his car of gunshot wounds to the left side of his face. Police also found a gun in the car.

A doctor at the Italian Hospital told police that the victim had suffered a nervous breakdown because his brother committed suicide six months ago.

The doctor added that there is a significant possibility that Mr. Abdullah committed suicide because of his grief over his brother's suicide.

Police reports attributed Mr. Abdullah's death to suicide.

JTV to offer alternative to satellites

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For people who cannot afford the minimum JD 650 one-time-charge to purchase a television satellite dish, the 5-channel JTV will offer five additional channels on a subscription basis at JD 300 for insurance and installation, plus JD 16 per month.

Although in the long-term the subscription rate would exceed the cost of a satellite dish, proponents of the 5-channel subscription service expect that most subscribers will be satisfied with the service, and if not, they are entitled to a refund of the JD 150 insurance.

"The government cannot stop people from buying television satellites; therefore it should provide them with a substitute," Director-General of JTV Radi Alkhas told the Jordan Times. Furthermore, he said sometimes the channels received by satellites are unnecessary, and their languages may not be understood by many viewers, so the large number of channels is of no use to them.

Mr. Alkhas pointed out that another element of concern is that some of the programmes offered through the 28 channels which range from entertainment, music and films, to documentaries, features and mini series, for example, are transmitted directly to the viewer's home.

Therefore, he stressed, they are not subject to any kind of review. Thus some programmes' subject matter might be objectionable to some subscribers.

But, as Mr. Alkhas explained, the subscription service offered by JTV has pre-selected 24-hour programmes which are considered acceptable and useful at the same time.

They include:

First channel: a local channel of Arabic and foreign programmes which offers a variety of documentaries, dramas, feature films, series, and entertainment, with emphasis on quality Arabic productions;

Second channel: CNN (Cable News Network), a 24-hour world news service;

Third channel: here the subscriber has three alternatives, either TV5 (a French channel), Super C channel or MTV (a 24-hour music channel);

Fourth channel: a sports channel such as the Eurosports and the primesports; and

Fifth channel: which is the BBC World Service channel.

As Mr. Alkhas put it "people are becoming increasingly interested in world affairs and have a desire to be updated on the current issues. Accordingly, a ministerial committee headed by the Minister of Information approved the project."

This new service project is a cooperative effort between the JTV and the Jordanian Company for Television, Radio and Cinema Production (JCTRCP) (a private company).

According to JCTRCP Director Jawad Maraqua, the company "obtained a loan from the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) to purchase the U.S.-made equipment needed to launch the new TV service."

Mr. Maraqua told the Jordan Times that JTV owns the equipment and will repay the JCTRCP for the cost through the initial subscription earnings, and later revenues will go to JTV.

Mr. Maraqua explained that the subscriber will pay JD 300 in advance (JD 150 as refundable insurance if the subscriber cancels the service and JD 150 for installation). The subscription fees, he said, are JD 16 per month for the maximum five channels available. JD 15 for four, JD 14 for three, JD 12 for two and JD 10 for one channel.

Although the transmission was originally due to begin in January 1994, there were some problems in the installation of the 24 transmitters needed to launch the project.

This delay, said Mr. Alkhas, is caused by the frequency interference in mountainous Amman area.

The service is expected to begin sometime in February and will cover the capital. JTV hopes to expand the project to include the entire Kingdom.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates New Zealand
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday sent a cable to New Zealand Governor General Dame Catherine Tizard congratulating her in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on New Zealand's national day. King Hussein wished the governor general good health and happiness and the people of New Zealand further progress and prosperity.

Ramadan working hours set
AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Saturday issued a communique setting working hours for government departments during the fasting month of Ramadan.

The communique stipulates that work at ministries and government departments during Ramadan will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2 p.m. The prime minister urged all civil servants to respect the sanctity of the holy month and to be considerate of the feelings of their colleagues, who will be fasting. Meanwhile, Chief Islamic Justice Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi called on citizens to watch for the crescent of the lunar month of Ramadan on the evenings of Wednesday and Thursday to determine the start of the month. Anyone who sees the crescent is requested to call at the nearest Islamic court in his/her area to testify to that, Sheikh Tamimi said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Art exhibition by Iraqi artists at Ab'ad Art Gallery — Mecca Street.
- Art exhibition by artist Huda Sami Qassem at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fubeis (Tel. 728902).
- Art exhibition by artist Mohammad Al Windawi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Art exhibition by artists Akram Isawi and Jamal Baddawi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Plastic art exhibition by artist Shaker Abu Ghazaleh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- Exhibition by Lebanese artist I. assein Madi at Darat Al Funun of the Al al Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the

FILM

- "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
- Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- Art exhibition by Suha Noursi entitled "Landscapes" at the Hotel Jordan International Gallery (8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.).
- Film entitled "The Colour Purple" at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m. (155 minutes).

LECTURE

- Lecture entitled "Art and Architecture" by Dr. Shamel Kubbek at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

- Poetry recital by poet Rasmi Abu Ali at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 7:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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Save the children

THE CASE of the 8-year-old child tragically killed in a school bus accident in Amman a couple of days ago brings to the fore once again the urgency of providing our youngsters with more protection on the roads. Children constitute a special category of people who are highly vulnerable to our ways of driving and handling traffic problems. Countries which take the right of the child seriously enough have put in place several measures to enhance the safety of children. Road accidents and related threats to life figure prominently on the list of these concerns.

The case of Nour Mustafa who was dragged under the wheels of the schoolbus that took her home is a bizarre one bordering on criminal negligence. The negligence in Nour's situation is broad enough to touch not only the bus driver or its supervisor but also the school itself. Judging by what one sees at the early hours of each school day, school buses speed past other motor vehicles rather dangerously in a bid, it seems, to suit the driver's mood or time. The driving pattern of many bus drivers is so reckless and arbitrary that they should not have been allowed to drive students to and from schools.

This is where the civil and criminal responsibilities of schools lie. School authorities must be made accountable for their negligent choice of people in whose hands the lives of children are entrusted. In an effort to make more profit and save money, many private schools engage in arbitrary selection of drivers that often jeopardises the lives of our younger generations.

Moreover, we have yet to see schools, private or public, practise what all the civilised world has been practising for decades, namely, assign personnel in and around their campuses to supervise the traffic around the vicinity of the schools in order to stop vehicles when necessary to ensure safe entry and departure of pupils.

Besides legislating laws that make it incumbent on schools to make traffic in their environs more manageable for safe arrivals and departures, traffic police should be called upon to facilitate street crossings for children. Surely our traffic people notice on daily basis how our students try desperately to cross streets on their way to and from schools at a great risk to their lives. Why can't we do what all other advanced countries have been doing and start assigning policemen to stop traffic at designated crossings so that our boys and girls can cross with relative safety. Should we wait till scores of other children die before we start taking solid action? This is also a subject for Parliament to take up because their electors expect them to seize the initiative in seeing to it that such urgently needed corrective measures are taken for the benefit of our society at large.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily said Saturday that the explosions that wrecked the movie houses in Zarqa and Amman were not politically motivated but rather the work of criminals and the police and the security authorities will easily handle them. Tareq Masarweh said that he was of this view since no party has claimed responsibility for the attacks and no opposition group has declared war on the Jordanian society. He also expressed the view that the perpetrators were paid by foreign groups to destabilise the country which is already subjected to enormous pressures on all sides. The writer said that these explosions are going to fail to achieve their aims and would never shake the society's self-confidence because the society's elements of freedom and democracy are much stronger than the forces of evil which act in the dark. We were not surprised by these explosions as they aim at creating trouble for the country and are perpetrated by hostile forces that aim at imposing hegemony on Jordan and the Arab region, said the writer. Jordan, he continued, is not like Egypt or Algeria and those who plotted the bombs to kill innocent people are not affiliated to political groups, otherwise we would have heard their claims. The writer called on Jordanian citizens to act collectively and stem this evil from its roots, noting that Jordanians are determined to safeguard their national interests.

DESPITE REPEATED declaration on the part of the concerned authorities that the war on unemployment will be won and that measures were under way to achieve that goal, one has little trust that such an objective will ever be attained, according to Abdullah Al Khatib, a columnist in Al Dustour daily. The writer said that there is no magic wand to deal with this problem which has been plaguing Jordan, and any observer and researcher can easily come to the conclusion that Jordan is fighting a losing battle and that rhetoric and oratory speeches can do nothing to deal with the situation. Jordan, he stressed, can by no means fight unemployment and poverty while its population continues to grow unchecked.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

The fight against corruption should be done responsibly, based on proof

Seeing the outcome of the statements made by Dr. Abdul Rahim Malhas, the minister of health, some things should be put in the right perspective. Those who took exception with both his approach and the contents of his statements did not do that for the benefit of the "corrupt monsters". They did so because they cannot be taken by words of anger and sensationalism, and because they care about Jordan's reputation, internally and externally, its vital interests and the protection of the innocent from vague and generalised accusations.

Everyone knows that loopholes and malpractices do exist everywhere. That is why strict laws are enacted to deter potential violators. The minister is charged with the specific responsibility of finding these violators and bringing them to justice.

The problem is that the minister generalised. He practically labelled all food and medicine dealers as greedy mafiosi and monsters. The real victims of this generalisation are the honest traders who import and distribute our food and medicine. In my opinion, the exports, food, medicine and tourism sectors were hurt and the image of the country was tarnished. The economic damages are very hard to assess at this stage and most likely will be protracted.

It is not right for a responsible minister, with full authority to correct the wrong and to put the record straight, to create a sensation by going public and generalising.

Some commentators have welcomed the minister's statements "irrespective of the consequences" and of the damages that could have been wrought to trade, industry, exports, tourism or the country's image, which, ironically, was hailed by the *Reuters* news agency as the health centre of excellence in the Arab World on the very day the minister was uttering his accusations.

I definitely agree that public confidence should not be built on deception and hiding the facts. The question therefore is whether the minister has facts. His statement in the Parliament on Wednesday showed that he has some impressions.

On the other hand, we should ask ourselves: What about setting a precedent?

If what Dr. Malhas did is acceptable, and a sure way to become popular and a man of principles, this may tempt the minister of water to go to the media and describe the water we drink as mixed with sewage water without being able to prove it. The minister of agriculture might be tempted to give an interview to a paper and claim that Jordanian vegetables and fruits are contaminated, poisonous and unfit for human consumption.

It could be an endless, destructive course of action whereby one could easily and unjustly throw wild accusations.

Some of these ministers may have a grain of truth in their assumed allegations. But should we accept their sweeping generalisations without hard evidence, then applaud them and call them heroes and men of principles, or, worse, candidates in the next elections with assured success?

It is our duty to strike hard against corruption, but to do so responsibly and supported by proof.

Listening to the lengthy statement of the minister of health in Parliament, one can easily conclude that he failed to prove that our food is trash, our traders are monsters, our medicine is not according to international specifications and our legal system yields to the pressures of the "sharks". On the contrary, he rephrased his previous statement to refer to a corrupt minority and talk about his efforts to supervise food shipments and prevent entry of suspect products.

Now the minister will have to substantiate his allegations before public opinion in the country starts flowing in reverse.



America is better off without a 'national identity'

By Richard Sennett

NEW YORK — The Clinton administration has unveiled its plan to bring Americans together. Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, announced this month that the government would hold a series of televised "town meetings" aimed at overcoming ethnic rivalries. They will explore the bonds of community, the meaning of American identity and "how immigrant groups fit into the American dream."

It is easy to sympathise with what Mr. Hackney, Bill Clinton and other sponsors of the forums want to achieve. They aim to challenge the inward-looking, ethnic and sexual zealotry that denies America a common civic culture. Yet this is a deeply wrong-headed project.

First, it looks back on an America that never existed. From the beginning, American society has been fragmented by differences of wealth, religion and language, as well as by the conflicts between slave and non-slave states. The waves of immigration after the Civil War did not break apart a unified nation; they added new diversities to old divisions.

In some ways, we Americans are more divided today than during that first great immigrant wave. For example, because our society has become more open sexually, marriage and family no longer trace a clear design in people's lives. Mr. Hackney is the latest in a long line of Americans who have sought to counter society's fissures by discovering a national identity or an American character. These phrases, however, merely display the gentlemanly face of nationalism.

Nationalism creates a mythic land in which people understand themselves and each other. The myth disguises inequalities and legitimates

attacks on people whose lives are different. Immigrants who came to America three or four generations ago thus encountered great prejudices based on the supposed fact that they weren't yet "real Americans."

Does Mr. Hackney feel bad about this? Of course he does. Yet he asserts that it is "much better to start talking about American identity before getting into immigration issues." This supposes an America that is obscured by the presence of outsiders, an America waiting for us once we stop obsessing about our differences.

It is easy to sympathise with what Mr. Hackney, Bill Clinton and other sponsors of the forums want to achieve. They aim to challenge the inward-looking, ethnic and sexual zealotry that denies America a common civic culture. Yet this is a deeply wrong-headed project.

First, it looks back on an America that never existed. From the beginning, American society has been fragmented by differences of wealth, religion and language, as well as by the conflicts between slave and non-slave states. The waves of immigration after the Civil War did not break apart a unified nation; they added new diversities to old divisions.

In some ways, we Americans are more divided today than during that first great immigrant wave. For example, because our society has become more open sexually, marriage and family no longer trace a clear design in people's lives. Mr. Hackney is the latest in a long line of Americans who have sought to counter society's fissures by discovering a national identity or an American character. These phrases, however, merely display the gentlemanly face of nationalism.

Nationalism creates a mythic land in which people understand themselves and each other. The myth disguises inequalities and legitimates

stereotypes, they seek to define "us" in contrast to a threatening "other." Members of racial minorities (or homosexuals, immigrants, the elderly) face the problem 19th century immigrants faced. It is not so much the danger of turning inward — a real temptation for any threatened group — as the more subtle challenge of how to avoid being defined by someone else.

Not only is Mr. Hackney's blueprint for culture flawed in principle, it is perverse in practice.

In the televised town meet-

ings, people will be given air time to explain themselves to each other. Mr. Hackney says he wants "to give people a sense they have been heard."

This is one of the oldest American techniques for dealing with communal tension. It began with the Puritans and was adopted and updated by psychological theory a generation ago in encounter groups and consciousness-raising sessions.

In this kind of meeting, people do not decide things. Instead, they attempt to rouse sentiments of sharing and community through self-revelations and expressions of sympathy: "I feel your pain."

These sorts of events tend to oversimplify our divisions and exclude the confusions in-

herent in real experience.

In intimate life, adults connect to one another in part by accepting that they cannot often understand one another.

Public discourse about "what we share" ignores this fact. And Mr. Hackney's "national conversation" will exclude from the televised picture those who do not easily open themselves up and commune.

Given the complexities of American society today, it is immensely important that people find ways to act together with those they do not understand or whom they dislike when they do understand.

The Clinton administration's finest achievements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, have acknowledged that America is not an island. Mr. Clinton has rightly sought to address, as in his proposed health care plan, collective problems that affect different Americans in radically different ways.

Perhaps Mr. Hackney's project is a symptom of how burdensome these responsibilities and realities feel. Talking about how we see each other and how we can come together is much more pleasant than reshaping the real America.

But because this sort of pleasure has brought such terrible nationalistic and xenophobic consequences in the past (and now as it, especially in the former Yugoslavia), I don't think this "national conversation" should be shrugged off as just another million-dollar folly.

The challenge and the promise of American society lie in finding ways of acting together without invoking the evil of a shared national identity. To do so we need to draw on our capacity to cooperate rather than on our desire to commune.

Mr. Hackney, by contrast, seems to offer a Serbian solution to the challenge of living with one another — The New York Times.

Asia wonders if NAFTA a boon or a bane

By David Schlesinger
Reuters

BEIJING — From the humming textile mills of south China to the shoe factories of Thailand, Asian managers are wondering how the new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will hit their share of the lucrative U.S. market.

NAFTA, which began on Jan. 1, calls for trade barriers separating the United States, Canada and Mexico to fall within 15 years.

The question for Asian managers is whether this will be a threat to their exports or whether it creates a new, multi-billion dollar opportunity.

China, which has built its recent prosperity on the back of a booming export machine, sees NAFTA as a clear threat because Mexico may become the premier low-cost manufacturing base for the U.S. market.

"NAFTA is a severe challenge to China's foreign trade," the official newspaper of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation declared recently.

But other countries take a balanced view of the new trade grouping, foreseeing great opportunities as NAFTA builds business in North America.

"In the really long term, the economies of those regions will grow and this will be positive," no matter what the short- and medium-term risks, said Piamsak Millintachinda, director of the North American division at Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The market will be bigger and start buying products from around the world. This is a great opportunity for Thailand."

Thailand, in compiling statistics about trade with NAFTA as a bloc, found that in 1992 it was the country's biggest regional market, outpacing the European Union.

A key fear for other Asian economies is that their share of the U.S. market can be no longer assured.

"NAFTA will bring major benefits to the world economy, but there is a danger we could lose market share in the United States," Taiwan's Economic Minister Chiang Ping-Kun

told the export-oriented island's press.

Asked directly if she were worried that NAFTA would be negative for China, Wu Yi, minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, told a news conference there was a tendency in the world to form regional economic blocs.

"I hope NAFTA will be open and non-exclusive. It should promote world trade and economy," she said.

A European diplomat said NAFTA is entirely negative for China, as Mexico, which borders the rich U.S. market, makes many of the same textiles and light industrial goods as China — and other Asian exporting powerhouses.

"Mexican wages are low and the workforce is easier to control than China's," he said.

Beijing's official Xinhua News Agency took a similar line in a recent commentary when it said: "With the opening of the Mexican market, that country will attract more foreign investment from the U.S., Canada, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, who will take the opportunity to enhance their indirect exports to the (NAFTA) zone."

Other economists downplay a threatened loss of market, saying that Asia's own rapidly growing domestic demand for consumer products will more than balance out the danger.

"A lot of the people investing in China are looking at Asia as their final or penultimate market," said Ian Perkin of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce. "Mexico doesn't fit into that equation unless you're selling directly into the North American market."

Some Asian nations like Taiwan, where the average worker makes more than 1,000 per month, have already priced themselves out of the labour-intensive market.

Others, like Indonesia which has just raised its minimum wage to \$1.81 per day, are still extremely competitive.

"But even bureaucrats in Jakarta are not prepared to be complacent about the challenge from NAFTA."

"Indonesian businessmen should increase their efficiency for greater competition in the future," one official said.

LETTERS

An exercise in democracy

To the Editor:

Minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas' recent statements have had a great impact on and touched a sensitive chord in Jordanians.

Many media people inside Jordan and abroad have tackled the issue, which proves how much importance is attached to such a matter.

For me, Dr. Malhas' declarations concerning food and medicine assume a paramount importance for several reasons. First, the minister tackles a most serious issue: the sources from which some traders import food not fit for consumption and medicine that does not meet international standards and specifications.

In addition, he talks about "sharks" who insist on over 300 per cent profit on medicine, all at the expense of the ordinary citizens.

Matters touching people's lives should be treated with utmost seriousness. A second point I would like to raise is the fact that revelations were made by a man on duty pinpointing the defects of his ministry. He is not an ordinary citizen who makes a passing remark, devoid of proof or meaning. His remarks should not therefore be taken lightly.

This is a matter that interests every Jordanian and I think it is now time for the representatives of the people to consider their responsibilities. People who voted for them are waiting to see how the members of Parliament will treat the matter. The issue should not be "cootained" or shoved aside; based on its resolution, parliamentarians can win people's trust or lose it.

The third and most important thing is, in my opinion, the phenomenon itself. It is indeed a new and eagerly awaited for thing, hardly found anywhere in the Arab World: a man in an important, vital office reveals to the press, in a daring and brave way, flaws and transgressions in his ministry.

We used to hear that everything was going the right way. I believe that the sooner we start addressing our problems, no matter how difficult, the faster the world will change in the desired direction.

The minister has taken the first step in the right direction. Hopefully others will follow and with cooperation and honesty our beloved country becomes a much better place.

The voices that made themselves heard on the matter show that democracy is getting stronger and people feel safe to speak their mind. This situation gives us, the younger generation, the right to dream of a better future.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Malhas for his stand.

Mohammad Saleh Al Masri,
Yarmouk University,
P.O. Box 2685,
Irbid.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Features

Deputies rally behind Malhas

(Continued from page 1)

bordering on paralysis" after the minister made his charges. "We value Dr. Malhas' courageous stand... regardless of the way he (made his charges) but we demand that he present the feature of his programme for reform," said Mr. Mansour.

In a fiery speech that included the strongest criticism of the government, Ms. Faisal also lashed out at fellow deputies who sought to question the abilities of Dr. Malhas and the accuracy of the charges he made in Wednesday's session. "All the attempts to cast doubts on what the minister has said have failed," said Ms. Faisal in criticism of the deputies who she said let the minister down in a precedent that can determine the shape of democracy in Jordan.

The case has been that deputies seek information and the government hides it from them, she said. For revealing information he has about corruption, Dr. Malhas deserves praise and support, she said. Saying that she could list "more than a hundred reasons" for not trusting the government, Ms. Faisal said the government did not re-

spond to Dr. Malhas' attempts to fight corruption and reform his ministry, citing his offer to resign from office twice as evidence for that.

"We are not about to hold (people) accountable here but we are here to initiate reform. Reform means that we have a government whose performance we can trust," she said. As a mother, "I appeal to your paternal feelings to support me in withholding confidence from the government," Ms. Faisal told deputies. She called on them to appeal to the King to designate a new government made of people "whose performance cannot be questioned."

Other deputies echoed calls for a thorough investigation of Dr. Malhas' charges, saying they know of cases of alleged corruption and attempts to sell unfit food in Jordan.

"No concessions could be made on this issue," said Deputy Mustafah Sbeikat, urging the government to stand by the health minister and the House not to restrict its response to speeches.

Over 20 more deputies are scheduled to talk on the issue Sunday when the House resumes its debate of Dr. Malhas' allegations.

Yemeni mediation panel meets

(Continued from page 1)

safety of its leaders and the start of implementing the accord before its leaders return from their Aden stronghold to Sanaa.

The all-party committee comprises 27 members, five from each of the coalition parties the GPC, the YSP and the Islah Party, five representing the opposition parties and seven independents.

The sources said opposition parties had arranged Saturday's meeting to agree on a date and a venue for the signing of the accord, decide on the non-Yemeni parties to be invited to attend the ceremony and work out security arrangements for the meeting and steps to be taken immediately upon the signing.

A previous call by the opposition for a meeting of the all-party committee on Wednesday was ignored by feuding parties.

Efforts by a special committee over two weeks have failed to narrow the gap between the feuding parties, the sources said.

Peres does not see accord this week

(Continued from page 1)

agreement... but it is Israel that refused to send a delegation this week to prepare for the meeting on Monday," he said.

"The Israelis have deliberately held up the talks for two weeks... it is the Israelis who are wasting time," Dr. Shaath said.

On Friday a PLO source said that before deciding whether to attend the Cairo talks, Mr. Arafat was looking for a clear sign from Israel that Mr. Rabin

had authorised Peres to negotiate a final agreement with the Palestinians.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Rabin "thinks in the short run he can wait more than we can," adding that he believed Mr. Rabin saw delay as a "bargaining tactic."

He warned, however, that such a strategy could backfire in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. "In the long run, if he (Rabin) says 'finished, I don't want to deal,' 'all hell will break loose,'" Dr. Shaath said.

Khartoum tense after attack

(Continued from page 1)

support of Iraq in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Ansar Al Sunna do not openly oppose the government but strongly disapprove of its main bastion, the National Islamic Front (NIF) of Dr. Turabi. They bitterly oppose the close relationship with Iran's Shiite Muslims that Dr. Turabi forged for the government.

In Cairo, Mohammed Abdul Rahman, chief aide to former Sudanese President Jaafar Numeiri, said the participation of foreigners is evidence that mainstream opposition groups did not attack the mosque.

"Our people in Khartoum suspect this was done by or planned by Turabi people," he said.

The Ansar Al "criticise the

government and the NIF every now and then," Abdul Rahman said. "They just wanted to frighten them, make them shut their mouths, stop criticising government policy."

The Umma Party of ousted Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi said the real casualty toll was 28 killed and 400 wounded.

"This massacre was planned and carried out by the National (Islamic) Front. Our sources tell us that the perpetrators were Sudanese and came and fled in government vehicles," the Umma party office in Cairo said in a statement.

"This dastardly crime coincided with an organised offensive against other mosque belonging to the Ansar Al Sunna in Abu Sied and Zaglouna (two Khartoum suburbs)," it added.

Israeli soldiers kill two

(Continued from page 1)

had the following account:

The Fatah official, Iyad Abu Anza, told the Abu Najah clan he did not have the money for the gun. A few minutes later, 15 men from the clan, masked and armed with guns and axes, showed up at Mr. Abu Anza's house demanding payment, but were stoned by Mr. Zbu Anza and his relatives. A member of the Abu Najah clan opened fire, killing 32-year-old Suleiman Abu Jazar, a bystander. The victim's family took revenge by torching the Fatah office in Rafah and beating Mr. Abu Anza.

At Gaza City's Azhar University, elections to the council of the medical association were cut short Friday afternoon by about two dozen Fatah activists who smashed physicians' car windows.

The activists from the nearby Shati refugee camp demanded that the physicians observe the general strike and also wanted to protest against the arrest of one of their own by troops. The Fatah office in Gaza City issued a leaflet in which it distanced itself from the activists and said the 1,000 association members could complete balloting next week.

A senior Fatah official in Gaza, Sufian Abu Zaidah, told Reuters: "The situation is out of control and the nerves of people are pressed harshly."

The West Bank town of Hebron was under curfew for a fourth day as soldiers searched four men who shot and wounded three Israelis on Wednesday. Residents said food and medical supplies were running low.

"After three days of curfews the Israeli authorities agreed to give the municipality emergency services permission to make medicine and food available to the inhabitants," Hebron Mayor Abdul Majeed Al Zeer told Reuters.

But he said some individuals carrying special permits to leave their houses in the curfew were afraid to go out because armed Jewish settlers, angry over the attack, were at large.

Hebron is a commercial centre and an industrial base in the West Bank," the mayor said. "When curfew goes on for four days in the past week and for eight days in the past month, it is an unacceptable punishment. I hope the military authorities will lift this punishment as soon as possible."

By Alan Thein Durning

WASHINGTON — Two-thirds of the world's original forests have been felled, and despite a decade of well-meaning global initiatives the chainsaw is working faster than ever. Halting deforestation will require radical changes in property rights to forests, pricing of forest products and political power over the fate of forests.

Current policies in both developed and developing countries accelerate forest loss by subsidising disposal of timber at cheap prices. In the United States, for example, the federal government's Forest Service, which long denied that it was subsidising logging, said in April that it would stop selling timber from 62 of the 156 national forests it administers because they had consistently lost money on timber sales.

Trees are worth a lot more standing than as lumber. The prescription drug industry alone is estimated to earn more than \$100 billion in annual sales of drugs with active ingredients derived from forests. No one knows how many new medications may be developed from forest products as yet untested. Flood prevention, watershed stabilisation and fisheries protection services provided by forests are each worth billions of dollars a year.

Because such services fail to show up in conventional accounting systems, these benefits and the trees that provide them remain undervalued. Governments should tax, rather than subsidise, forest destruction. Then more of the value of forests would be reflected in the price of wood.

Charging visitors to U.S. national forests just \$3 per day would generate more revenue than selling timber from those forests does now. The proceeds would be a powerful incentive for the U.S. Forest

Service to preserve areas under their control instead of promoting timber cutting and mining.

The first priority for creating a sustainable forest economy is a property rights system that allies the interests of forest dwellers with the health of forest ecosystems. Reforestation initiatives in developing countries routinely fail when the forest land is under the exclusive control of the state rather than of local residents.

Thousands of recent examples show that joint management systems, in which residents benefit from forest use and protection, produce tangible results for conservation. Some 10,000 villages in India

are sharing management responsibilities in an area of about 1.5 million hectares. The concept has been gaining popularity elsewhere in Asia and in Africa.

Meanwhile, a few nations in the American tropics have taken more decisive strides towards forest tenure reform. Under intense grass-roots pressure, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela have all recognised land rights of tribes that have inhabited and conserved the forests for hundreds of years. Each of these countries has demarcated vast areas in the Amazon basin as indigenous homelands. While there are serious problems in enforcing these regula-

tions in the face of pressures for development, it is nonetheless a hopeful sign for the world's forests.

Goods and services from the woods provide more money and jobs than chopping down trees. The scenic and recreational benefits of forests earn billions of dollars for both the growing nature tourism industry and local residents. In the United States, the market value of non-timber forest products, such as berries, decorative plants and mushrooms, may exceed that of solid wood harvest.

The market for just one forest product from Southeast Asia, rattan palm stems used to make wicker furniture, is

worth \$3 billion a year. In Belize, expert gatherers of forest products can earn between two and ten times as much per hectare as farmers who clear the trees for crops. Without secure control of these resources, however, their potential for sustainable employment will be lost.

Ecological pricing should be the second priority for creating a sustainable forest economy. Virgin timber is priced far below full cost.

For instance, the price of teak does not reflect the costs of flooding that rapacious teak logging has caused in Burma. Nor does the price of old-growth fir from the U.S. Pacific Northwest include losses

suffered by the fishing industry because logging destroys salmon habitat.

These related strains are the first recourse of scientific breeders in seeking to protect crops against new pests and diseases. Export sales of coffee, cocoa beans and other commodities that trace their origins to forests in the tropics and subtropics exceeded \$20 billion in 1991.

To create a permanent forest economy will require political change. Unless the strong grip of big timber interests — the miners, ranchers and other resource extractors — can be broken, forest conservation will be difficult if not impossible.

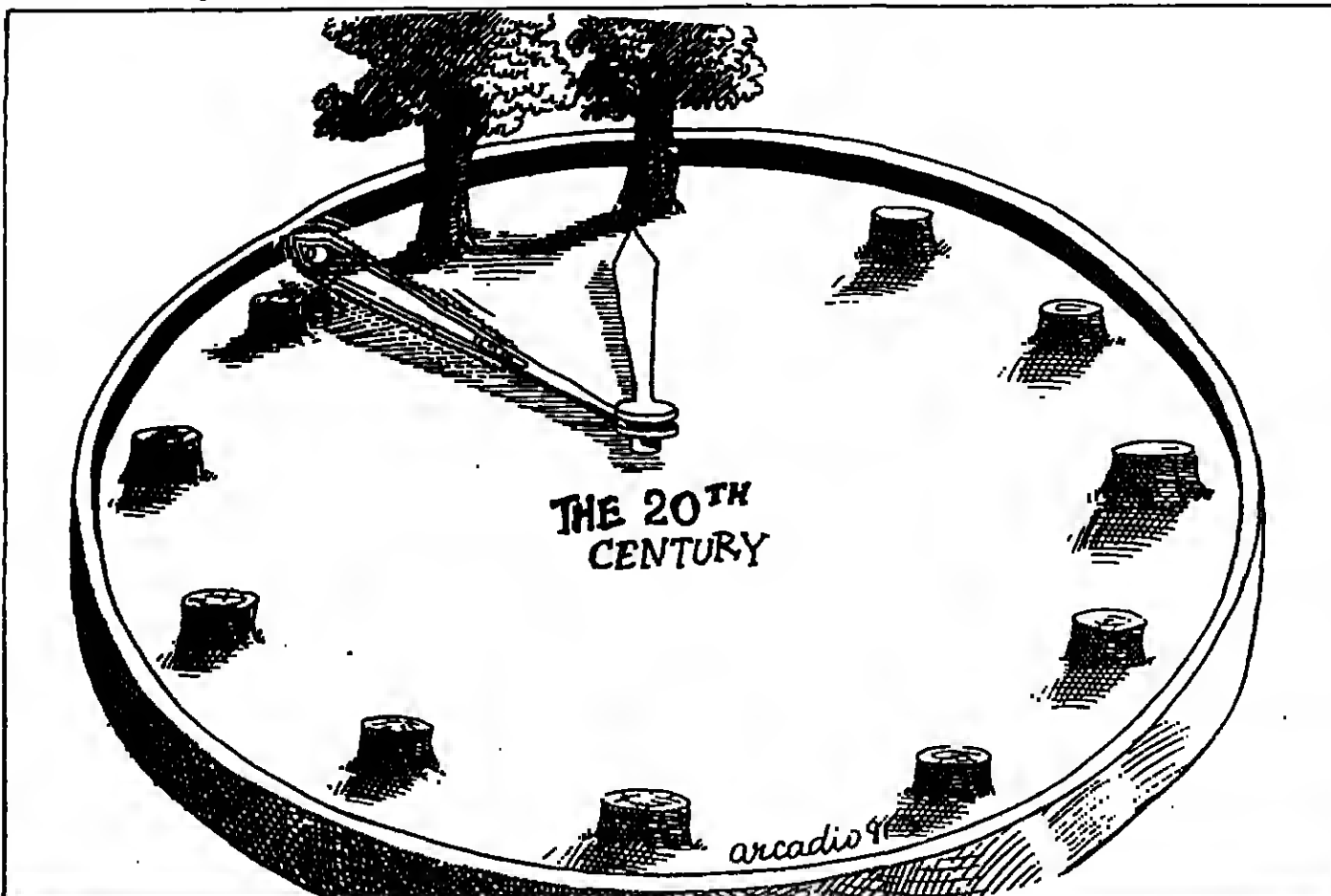
In Malaysia, clear-cutting is driven by handouts of logging licences that are a major form of patronage for politicians. Officials distribute concessions to loyal supporters, who level the trees for quick profits.

In varying degrees, this bond pervades all the world's major timber economies. From 1985 to 1992 in the U.S. timber states of Washington and Oregon, the wood products industry outspent environmentalists 6-to-1 in contributions to congressional candidates. As a result, those grateful members of Congress set higher logging targets for national forests in their districts than the Forest Service itself recommended.

The ultimate challenge is to make ecological services sufficiently remunerative for all groups involved — residents, logging towns and government agencies — so that they act as defenders, not destroyers, of forests.

The writer is a researcher for Worldwatch Institute in Washington and author of "Saving the Forests: What Will It Take?" This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Let's put a proper price on trees



Gaza workers live in hovels, work on palaces

By John West
Reuter

RAFAH, GAZA STRIP — Mohammad Fathi seized his chance when the bus driver spotted an Israeli police car near Tel Aviv just after dawn.

"Turn off the main road, quick, we don't have work permits," he shouted. Others from his crew joined him and the driver, against a storm of protest from other passengers, made a three-km detour into the city's plush Ramat Gan suburb to lose the police car.

"Of course we do have permits, but look, we've saved ourselves the walk," Fathi explained as he got off the bus. "Getting bread in your mouth is all about deception."

The 34-year-old college graduate spends more than five hours a day commuting between the million-dollar villa in Israel he is working on as a fitter and the room with a leaky iron roof in Gaza, where he sleeps with his wife and four children.

But by Gaza standards Fathi is lucky. He has a well-paid job, one of fewer and fewer as Israel — fearing attacks by Muslim fundamentalists and Palestinian radicals — clamps down on Gaza workers crossing to work in the Jewish state.

The government closed the border completely for three months last year, shutting off an estimated 55,000 Gazans from jobs that supported up to 300,000 people in the strip and form one of the main sources of income.

Since then it has yielded slowly to pressure from Israeli employers who say they need the workers to perform low-paid menial jobs Israelis are not prepared to do themselves, while setting the goal of cutting Palestinian labour to a minimum.

"There seems to be a two-track policy now," said Jaber Al Qdaihi, an economist at the Maan Centre for Research in Gaza. "Palestinians, particularly Gazans, are known as hard workers and have been allowed back into two main fields, construction and agriculture. On the other hand, the trend is to remove Palestinians from jobs like waiting in restaurants or services where there is contact with the Israeli public, and replace them with less politicised Arabs from in-

side Israel, or foreigners," he said.

Mohammad Madoukh of the Palestinian Trade Union Federation estimated about 13,000 Gazans now cross Erez checkpoint to work in Israel every day. Israel's civil-run administration quotes a higher figure of 23,000 workers with work permits but many have to pay huge fines or taxes before they can go back to work.

In the good old days — as both Israelis and many Palestinians remember them — before the uprising began in 1987, up to 80,000 Gazans worked in Israel, travelling freely in and out in private cars looking for work.

Under the new system, Palestinians are granted work permits only when a specific Israeli employer asks for them by name. They can travel only by specially licensed buses.

Workers are thrown into a chaotic and murky world of scams and alliances in order to get and keep jobs — and get paid by unscrupulous bosses.

Under a complicated administration which few of them understand, they fall prey to huge taxes and rampant bureaucracy where Palestinians allege corruption is widespread.

At Erez checkpoint in the cold dark of a winter's morning, thousands of workers stand bleakly in line waiting to present permits to Israeli soldiers. Hundreds of hawkers work the queues selling tea and sandwiches in the liveliest street market in Gaza — recognition of the migrants' buying power.

Dark shadows flicker in a nearby orchard, as men run between trees, hiding and waiting for Israeli border police sitting in jeeps to be distracted for even a few seconds to give them the chance to scale the perimeter fence and cut through razor wire.

Palestinians say others hide in bus luggage compartments and car boots, sometimes smuggled across for a fee by Israeli settlers.

Fathi, who earns about 80 shekels (\$25) a day, recalls how he once got back almost 6,000 shekels (\$2,000) from an employer who refused to pay him.

The Palestinian impersonated an Israeli to get past security guards in the man's

office and enlisting the help of another Israeli contractor, of Libyan origin, to threaten legal action.

"Me and the Libyan, we're not exactly friends, neither of us calls the other one to ask after his health. But we're good allies. He helped me because he knows I can bring him a good team of workers whenever he needs one," he said.

A group of workers gathered in his house complain for hours about getting up early, the fines they pay, the hard work and the humiliation of being ordered about by Israeli foremen they regard as lazier, more stupid and better paid than them.

But they will keep on going back as long as they can. "There is nothing, no food without Israel," said Khalil Bital, another construction worker. "That's the way it is, you can either accept the rules of the game or starve."

The coming of Palestinian self-rule is expected to boost the local job market in Gaza as hundreds of millions of dollars of foreign aid pour into the strip to build labour-intensive infrastructure projects.

But income from workers in Israel will still form a vital part of the local economy and Palestinian leaders are trying to negotiate more work permits for Palestinians from both Gaza and the West Bank.

Israeli officials have said they will consider allowing more workers back but it is not clear if they will allow the same numbers of workers as before the uprising or even the closure last year.

Opponents seen unlikely to derail S. African vote

By Rodney Pinder
Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — Militant whites and Inkatha Zulus opposing South Africa's first all-race election in April pose the threat of increased violence but will not derail the vote or negate the result, analysts say.

The white right could attack polling booths, voters and the black-led government certain to emerge, and there could be a wider uprising from disaffected Zulus in Natal province and in migrant worker hostels elsewhere.

But diplomatic and political experts predict the security forces, backed by the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela, and the National Party of President F.W. de Klerk, will hold the line nationally, ensuring the election is judged broadly free and fair by the world.

"The international community wants this election. South Africa only has one go and this is the go," said one western diplomat.

Although probably containable in political terms, sustained violence could have a grave economic impact, the analysts said.

It could badly distract the new national unity government — expected to be led by the ANC — from economic priorities aimed at ensuring stable growth and redressing apartheid distortions, and would scare off vital foreign investment.

"If things go wrong, like reaching a certain level of violence that edges towards civil war, the money that has come in could go out again," said portfolio manager Rob Lee of the board of Executors Investment House.

Foreign investors bought a net 3.2 billion rand (\$1 billion) of equities in 1993 and 794 million rand (\$265 million) in the first three weeks of this year.

Rapid reconstruction and development and the creation of jobs on a huge scale are seen as essential to bring peace to black communities riven by unemployment, crime and political violence in which 14,000 people have died in the past four years — and to ensure the long-term survival of the new rulers.

Analysts cautioned against too much gloom following the latest deadlock in constitutional negotiations between the government and ANC on the one hand and the Freedom Alliance, mainly comprising conservative whites and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Although prospects for an ideal all-inclusive election look bleak now, contacts will continue behind the scenes. Mr. de Klerk has said consistently that disaffected parties will be able to join in right up to April 27, the first voting day.

Sources close to negotiations say government and ANC efforts will focus on the position of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini and other Zulu leaders apart from Dr. Buthelezi, and possible splits in the white right between war-

talking neo-Nazis and calmer voices.

Some analysts, however, question whether the National Party and the ANC might not secretly welcome an alliance boycott. The ANC would sweep Natal, Inkatha's home province, and the NP would probably glean the entire white conservative vote. Polls show 80 per cent of right-wingers would vote regardless of their leaders' position.

If the brinkmanship results in a final falling-out, "there is little doubt violence will escalate enormously," said Risk analyst Wim Booysse.

Big flare-ups could be expected in Natal, where Inkatha and ANC Zulus have been fighting since 1984, and in barack-like Zulu hostels in townships around Johannesburg, the business heart of the nation, to where the conflict spread in 1990.

Even if leaders such as Dr. Buthelezi stress passive resistance to the new order, analysts fear that followers fired by rhetoric and fuelled by decades of racial hatred could run wild.

White attacks on key installations such as power supplies and election booths could test the loyalty of the white-led security forces to the new order. But analysts generally expect the professional ranks of the armed forces to hold.

Wellcome managers hold workshop in Aqaba

AMMAN — Senior managers working with the multinational pharmaceutical company The Wellcome Foundation Ltd., participated in a management workshop at the Holiday International Hotel Aqaba last week.

These managers were from U.K., Russia, Serbia, Tur-

key, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

The visit to Aqaba was done through Loisirs Tour Operator. The visitors praised the services all over Jordan and expressed satisfaction with their stay in Aqaba, with its ideal climate.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East providing education, health and relief and social services to Palestine refugees requires a

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Kuwait seen losing large oil output in war fire

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is estimated to have lost about three times its annual production in 1991 Gulf war oil fires but preliminary studies show its largest oilfield, Burgan, suffered no substantial damage, economists said Saturday.

Al Shail Economic Consultancy, commenting on an oil ministry policy statement issued last week, said early results of a study of war damage to the oil reservoirs was one of several issues of central importance being debated by oil officials.

"The Buran study will be finalised before August 1994 and initial results of reservoir studies that have been concluded and Kuwait Oil Company estimates have both indicated no substantial damage occurred," its weekly economic review said. "On the other

hand, production losses from wells blazes are estimated to be three times regular annual production."

Al Shail did not give a figure for the losses. Based on current output of 2.0 million barrels per day (b/d), three times annual production would amount to 2.19 billion barrels.

Oil industry reference publications have estimated up to 1.5 billion barrels were lost during the oil fires.

Burgan's 50 billion barrels of crude put it in the super-giant class. Kuwait has an estimated 95 billion barrels of crude, around 10 per cent of the world's recoverable reserves.

Al Shail said it was certain its remarks were "in line with the ministry's communiqué. The communiqué lacked some clarity which could probably be attributed to political reasons."

World Bank to speed up loans to Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A senior World Bank team left Beirut for Washington Friday saying it would speed up loans for Lebanon in health, education and irrigation.

The team spent four days in Beirut discussing joint development programmes with Lebanon in the three fields.

"We will send a detailed report on the visit's results to the World Bank administration to speed up the decision on some set loans for Lebanon in the fields of health, education and irrigation," team member Faisal Al Khaled told reporters.

The programmes are being financed under a \$175 million World Bank loan granted last year.

The team members, who held talks with Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri before their departure, are all World Bank executive directors. They arrived in Beirut Tuesday.

"Our visit was fruitful and successful. We examined the

country's situation," Mr. Khaled said at Beirut Airport. Other World Bank teams would visit Lebanon soon, he said.

Angel Torres, another team member, told reporters they were impressed by Lebanon's energy to rebuild after the 1975-90 civil war.

A second World Bank delegation in Beirut is spending two weeks assessing Lebanon's financial sector.

An International Monetary Fund team is also spending two weeks in the country studying ways of offering technical assistance to the public financial sector.

Mr. Hariri told parliament last month that Lebanon has already secured \$1.5 billion in loans which have helped start the rebuilding of its infrastructure destroyed by 15 years of civil war.

In his address the billionaire prime minister said agreements in principle for an additional \$920 million dollars in loans

had been reached.

Italy topped the list of creditors, with \$394 million aimed mainly at the reconstruction of Lebanon's electricity network.

The European Union and the Luxembourg-based European Investment Bank came second with \$266.5 million also earmarked for power, water and ports projects.

The Saudi Monetary Fund was third in extending aid worth \$230 million, followed by the World Bank which provided \$175.5 million and Kuwait with another \$114 million.

France has meanwhile offered to provide \$450 million for the revamping of Lebanon's electricity grid, Mr. Hariri said, adding that power would be ensured 24 hours a day throughout the country by the end of 1995.

Meanwhile, the head of Lebanon's businessmen's federation has praised the government for the "professionalism and credibility" of its financial

policies but urged Mr. Hariri to stimulate the economy, fight unemployment and improve health insurance.

Selim Zeeni, president of the Federation of Businessmen's Associations, said in its first full year in office in 1993 the government had launched projects to rebuild infrastructure and had restored monetary stability and cut inflation.

"This financial policy brought about a reduction of the budget deficit and reflects a professionalism and credibility which have permitted progress from total anarchy to rationalism in managing financial affairs," Mr. Zeeni said in Beirut newspapers.

But he said the government needed a plan to stimulate all sectors of the economy and urged it to set up an economic and social council that would give businessmen a share in decisions affecting reconstruction.

"We want to take part in

decision-making because reconstruction is not limited to issuing tenders for contracts," Mr. Zeeni said.

He said the reconstruction effort needed a matching attempt to reduce unemployment and improve professional training and called for the creation of a medical insurance system to avert dramatic situations for the poor and ensure that Lebanon did not face serious social crises in the long term.

In another area, a member of the committee setting up the secondary stock market was quoted as saying Friday that Lebanon's planned secondary market will continue to operate even after the official Beirut Stock Exchange is reactivated.

But he said shares of Solidere, the recently floated \$1.8 billion company that will rebuild central Beirut, would have to be traded on the official exchange once it reopened.

"The continuance of the secondary market in Lebanon is mandatory," said Nabil Aoun, who also heads the stockbrokers association of the official bourse which closed in 1984.

He told the daily newspaper Al Anwar: "We can keep the secondary market going but the Solidere shares would have to move to the bourse."

Stockbrokers who have been idle since the official exchange closed feel they are being frozen out of the planned secondary market and are asking that the official exchange be reopened.

Antoine Khawaga, head of the last official stock exchange committee, told Al Anwar in a separate interview the authorities were trying to bypass the exchange.

"They want to pull (quoted) companies out of the bourse and trade their shares in the secondary market. That's what I am against," he said.

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UNORGANIZED MARKET INDEX PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 05/02/1994

COUNTRY'S NAME

TRADED VOLUME
PREV. CLOSING PRICE
OPENING PRICE
CLOSING PRICE

JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	218,550	192.7500	192.0000	192.0000
JORDAN POSTAL BANK	73,582	164.0000	164.0000	164.0000
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	14,539	1.1300	1.1300	1.1300
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Pyongyang warns U.S. would lose another Korean war

TOKYO (Agencies) — North Korea warned the United States Saturday that it would be humbled and defeated if it started another Korean war.

An analysis carried on the official North Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in Tokyo, said the United States was readying itself for war "under the guise of aiming for peace on the Korean peninsula."

"With the insidious intention to unleash a new war in Korea, United States is stepping up its arms buildup in and around South Korea and engaging itself in military espionage, watching for a chance of a surprise strike at the DPRK," the KCNA commentary said.

The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) is the official name of the North Korea state.

"Military moves and anti-DPRK rows of the U.S. war-thirsty quarters have become all the more undisguised entering the new year," it added.

The United States, it said, would "suffer a more tragic and grave defeat than in the past Korean War in which it was humbled and bruised all over."

Last month, the Communist state reacted angrily to a U.S.-South Korean plan to deploy Patriot air-defence missiles in the South to bolster Seoul's defences.

Pyongyang has also stridently objected to joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises on the peninsula.

North Korea has been under

intense international pressure to allow inspection of its nuclear facilities which the United States and its allies believe are aimed at weapons development. Pyongyang has said its nuclear programme is peaceful.

"No military pressure and strong arm can ever work on the Korean people," KCNA said. "Our people who know of the vulnerability of the United States better than anyone else and have the experience of fighting it for three years regard it not as a superpower but as a bluffing paper tiger."

A U.S.-led 16-nation force under the United Nations flag engaged troops from North Korea, and later China, during the 1950-53 Korea War which most historians consider was started by the North's invasion of the South.

The war ended with an armistice which has left the divided peninsula the world's last remaining cold war flashpoint.

North Korea angrily denied Saturday a U.S. State Department report released this week charging it with violation of human rights.

"This is a brazen interference in the internal affairs of our country and an intolerable insult to the Socialist system of our style centering on the popular masses," the KCNA said.

The U.S. report follows a similar report last October by Amnesty International which said Pyongyang's Stalinist rulers tortured or executed thousands of people over the past 30 years and detained tens

of thousands more.

"These gross human rights violations continue today," the London-based Amnesty says in a bleak report on the secretive Asian state which describes itself as "paradise on earth".

Saturday's KCNA despatch, monitored in Tokyo, went on: "The DPRK government, which regards it as its immovable policy to value man and respect his rights, substantially provides genuine freedom and rights to all citizens and creditably ensures their abundant and happy life."

South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo said Saturday "resolute steps" might have to be taken to settle the long-running dispute over North Korea's refusal to accept nuclear inspections.

"We can't rule out the possibility that we will be placed in an extreme situation in which resolute steps are taken to resolve North Korea's nuclear problem," Mr. Han told a meeting of South Korean heads of foreign missions.

Mr. Han, however, said that Seoul would not give up efforts to resolve the row through dialogue even in the event the confrontation over the North's nuclear programme worsens.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is expected to declare North Korea in breach of a nuclear safeguards pact later this month unless Pyongyang agrees to open up suspect nuclear sites to inspection, South Korean officials said.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog

would have no alternative but to pass the issue on to the Security Council for punitive steps against the North, including economic sanctions, they said.

Mr. Han plans to visit Washington from Feb. 16 to 19 during which he will meet President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher to coordinate joint measures to tackle the North's nuclear issue, a ministry spokesman said.

Vice South Korean Foreign Minister Hong Soon-Young told reporters Saturday: "The door will be always open to dialogue even if sanctions (against the North) are imposed."

"Concerns among IAEA's governors are mounting over the North's refusal to accept both special and regular inspections," the South Korean envoy to IAEA, Lee Se-Young, told reporters in Seoul.

If the North's hardline nuclear stance remains unchanged by Feb. 21, the agency's director general, Hans Blix, will tell the Security Council that the agency is no longer able to ensure nuclear materials declared by Pyongyang are being used solely for peaceful purposes, Mr. Lee said.

With less than three weeks to go before the IAEA must issue a report to its board of governors.

North Korea said Friday there was "no immediate prospect" of letting the IAEA conduct unconditional inspections of its nuclear sites.



African National Congress President Nelson Mandela holds a baby as he walks to an election rally in Paarl, South Africa (AFP photo)

Mandela: Rightwingers are playing with fire

ODENDAALSRSUS, South Africa (Agencies) — ANC leader Nelson Mandela Saturday told South African white rightwingers they were playing with fire by committing acts of violence in the run-up to elections in April.

"Innocent people, both black and white, are going to die as a result of what Ferde Hartzenberg, General Constand Viljoen are doing," Mr. Mandela told about 200 nurses and doctors at Thabong Hospital.

Mr. Hartzenberg leads the pro-apartheid Conservative Party and Gen. Viljoen heads the rightwing alliance Afrikaner Volksfront.

"We are trying very hard to dampen this violence, to appeal to all reasonable South Africans: Let us save our country," Mr. Mandela said.

Mr. Mandela, on the second day of a campaign visit to the Orange Free State maize and mining belt, said the African National Congress (ANC) had already gone through a war and would not wish anything like that to happen again.

"We want to make peace in this country. Peace with Afrikaner leaders to form a new South Africa. We must work out the solution together," Mr. Mandela said.

The white right, in alliance with black conservatives, are threatening to boycott the historic elections unless their demands for separate homelands are met.

At the hospital, a nurse pinned a red rose to Mr. Mandela's shirt. Hospital sister Marieta Clark, an Afrikaner, said she was very excited in meeting Mr. Mandela and "everybody in the hospital felt that way."

Mr. Mandela's speech in the hospital was punctuated with

Shell kills at least 36 in worst Bosnian atrocity

SARAJEVO (R) — A shell slammed into Sarajevo's main open air market Saturday, killing at least 36 people and wounding dozens in the single atrocity of Bosnia's 22-month civil war.

Doctors said mangled corpses were still arriving at hospitals and morgues and the death toll was expected to continue rising.

The flood of wounded men, women and children overwhelmed medical teams at hospitals where the wounded lay moaning on corridor floors.

Many survivors were carried in blankets aboard commandeered private cars. The dead were brought on the back of trucks.

The shell hit a table in the middle of the crowded market in Sarajevo's battered old town at around 1130 GMT. The dead and wounded were strewn in pools of blood among the aisles between the stalls of meagre produce.

"Some people were literally torn apart," one eyewitness said. "Heads and limbs were ripped off bodies."

It happened a day after besieging Serbs, who have been hammering Sarajevo with artillery and mortar fire all week, killed nine Muslims queuing for food aid in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinje.

General Sir Michael Rose, the commander of U.N. peacekeepers in Bosnia, Saturday brushed aside Bosnian Serb denials that they were responsible for the Dobrinje slaughter.

"The analysis of the crates indicates with certainty that the mortars were fired from Bosnian Serb positions," Gen. Rose said in a statement made in French.

"I don't accept the Serb denial, firing into such a populated area is unacceptable. Those responsible must be confronted with their criminal actions."

The Bosnian Serb army and Nikola Koljevic, vice president of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb Republic had claimed the Dobrinje attack was carried out by the Muslims themselves to curry world sympathy.

Reports by U.N. Military Observers (UNMOs) have shown that almost all the shelling in Sarajevo this week has been carried out by Serb forces besieging the Bosnian capital.

U.N. spokesman Major Jose Labandeira told reporters the Serb poured 200 artillery rounds on Sarajevo Friday alone. UNMOs did not see any return artillery fire by government forces.

Previous shelling incidents in Sarajevo have inflicted heavy death tolls but none so high as this.

The killing in a mortar attack of 16 people in what became known as the bread queue massacre in May 1992 helped convince the United Nations to impose sanctions on Serb-led Yugoslavia.

Demi Moore gives birth to 3rd child, a daughter

LOS ANGELES (R) — Demi Moore has given birth to her third daughter, a spokeswoman for the actress and her actor-husband Bruce Willis said Friday. The baby, which was born Thursday, was named Tallulah Belle. The couple's other children are Rumer, 5, and Scout, 2. "Both mother and baby are doing fantastic," the spokeswoman's statement said.

Argentine judge shuts down bogus hair-loss clinics

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A former machinist who hired unemployed steelworkers and founded two hair-loss clinics was forced out of business Friday by an Argentine judge for posing as a doctor. The judge said the Buenos Aires entrepreneur was also using medication that had not been authorised by the government.

Man jailed for defacing Jackson's star

LOS ANGELES (R) — A man who said he spray-painted Michael Jackson's star on the Hollywood walk of fame because he hated "child molesters" pleaded no-contest to a vandalism charge and was sentenced to 100 days in jail. Jose Gomez, 33, was arrested Tuesday after a passer-by witnessed him spraying the singer's star — a bronze plaque embedded in the sidewalk — with fluorescent orange paint. The witness, Edward Lees, chased Mr. Gomez, caught him and turned him over to police. At a court hearing, deputy city attorney Bill Sterling said Mr. Gomez told investigators: "I sprayed his star because I hate child molesters. I hate Michael Jackson because he molests little kids." The incident occurred a week after Jackson reached a settlement with a 14-year-old boy who accused him of sexual molestation, agreeing to pay the child millions of dollars. Jackson's attorneys said, the settlement was not an admission of guilt and continued to maintain his innocence. The 35-year-old entertainer is still under investigation by prosecutors in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara County, the site of his Neverland ranch.

Cold snap saves 6-day-old finger

BEIJING (R) — Chinese doctors have successfully reattached a worker's finger six days after it was severed thanks to a "medical miracle" made possible by extremely cold weather, the official China Daily said Saturday. The man was unable to seek treatment from a local air force hospital until almost a week after his accident because of poor transportation, the newspaper said. "However, he was wise enough to put the cut finger in a plastic bag and store it outdoors, where the temperature was 20 degrees below zero," the newspaper said.

Celebrities strip for 'safe sex'

NEW YORK (R) — Of all the fund-raising campaigns to promote safe sex, Playboy has come up with a unique one, in which celebrities take off their clothes to help fight AIDS. The pictorial in the upcoming March issue, includes erotic photos of actresses Sonia Braga, Mariel Hemingway, Sandra Bernhard and Shannen Doherty, the only one featured in colour. The stars are quoted discussing the virtues of safe sex and condoms. Bernhard says, "there's nothing I enjoy more than buying condoms." The pictures are to be included in two large books and a series of auctions in the United States and Europe.

Kerrigan-Harding photo goes on block

NEW YORK (R) — For someone wishing to own a part of what is certain to become television movie history, Christie's said it is planning to auction a picture of Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding, signed by both skaters. Christie's said the picture is expected to go for a modest \$800 to \$1,000. The picture also includes 1992 Olympic gold medalist Kristi Yamaguchi, who also signed it. Christie's notes that the two skaters have been getting international headlines since the Jan. 6 attack on Kerrigan. Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly, has been charged in planning the attack.

Minister's remarks on foreigners embarrass Major

LONDON (R) — A British minister's comments that other countries are corrupt have caused instant offence, despite a swift retraction, and embarrassed Prime Minister John Major just when he thought he had his party under control.

Hoping to limit the damage Michael Portillo, chief secretary to the treasury, spent hours in interviews on Friday saying he had not meant what he said.

But Saturday newspapers latched on to the remarks as the latest in a string of blunders including adulterous affairs and questionable financial deals that have battered the government's image.

"Foreigners are corrupt — Portillo," ran the headline in the left-wing Guardian.

Mr. Portillo, the son of a Spanish Republican who fled to Britain, used school-leavers "A level" examinations as an example for his student audience of Britain's worth.

"If any of you have got an A-level it is because you have worked to get it," he said. "Go to any other country and when you have got an A-level you have bought it."

"When you go into business you will win contracts because you are good at what you do," he added. "Go to a number of other countries and you would win contracts because your cousin was a minister or because you have lined the pocket of some public official."

The opposition Labour Party called on him to resign. One parliamentarian said, "Thank God he's not foreign secretary."

Mr. Portillo swiftly took back his remarks, saying he had mistakenly gone too far. "I didn't say Britain was the only honest country in the world but I did say more than I had intended because I was speaking off the cuff," he said on television news.

"I didn't name any countries... I made an exaggeration... Anyone can make an error like that. I'm sorry if anyone was insulted by it."

But the Daily Telegraph and the Times, calling the comments a gaffe, quoted critics as saying it showed Mr. Portillo, a rising star on the right wing of the ruling Conservative Party often tipped as a future leader, was not ripe for high office.

Mr. Portillo admitted his timing was unfortunate, coming on a day when a poll showed nearly two-thirds of voters felt "the Conservatives these days give the impression of being very sleazy and disreputable."

The blunder comes at the end of a successful week for Prime Minister John Major when he bolstered his image by acting tough towards Mr. Portillo's right-wing allies

Cambodian leaders cheer troops on base capture

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — The Cambodian co-premiers congratulated government forces Saturday for the successful capture of a major rebel Khmer Rouge base in north-west Cambodia.

Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen congratulated the troops for seizing the Khmer Rouge's logistics and residential base at Anlong Veng, near the Thai border, in Siem Reap province.

Anlong Veng was the radical faction's headquarters for all guerrilla operations in North and central Cambodia.

"The capture of Anlong Veng cuts off the main supplies of the Khmer Rouge group who have created disturbances. Insecurity and provoked turmoil," the co-premiers said a statement.

Prince Ranariddh said earlier that government troops had almost total control of the base and surrounding area.

The prince did not give casualty figures. But Mr. Hun Sen said Thursday a three-pronged troop movement had recaptured the Khmer Rouge base, with 10 soldiers killed and more than 10 wounded, most of them by mines.

But another government source privately admitted that mines had taken a "heavy toll," both during the troop build-up in the area over the past weeks and during the actual advance itself.

A Khmer Rouge official in Phnom Penh, who demanded anonymity, said he had received a fax Saturday afternoon from the base saying it had come under heavy fire but

had not been captured. If it had been seized that morning, as the government claimed, the official said there would have been no one left to send the message.

Prince Ranariddh maintained, however, that the only task left for government troops at Anlong Veng was to repair a bridge leading into it, so tanks could fortify the base to maintain permanent control over the area.

The Khmer Rouge official said before Prince Ranariddh's announcement that it did not matter if the guerrilla group lost Anlong Veng.

"We have been fighting for 15 years," he said. "Sometimes they defeat us and sometimes we defeat them."

Prince Ranariddh said soldiers met little resistance in the attack on the base, adding that its commander, notoriously tough Khmer Rouge Gen. Ta Mok, had fled Anlong Veng several days ago.

The Khmer Rouge official in Phnom Penh, however, insisted that Ta Mok had not abandoned the base, which is just 10 kilometres from the Thai border.

Thailand, a longtime supporter of the Khmer Rouge, did not appear to be helping the guerrilla group in this latest attack, Prince Ranariddh said, noting that reports from the battlefield indicated it was not even providing ambulances for wounded guerrillas.

Prince Ranariddh said the Khmer Rouge had left the government no alternative but to attack Anlong Veng.

Nude paraglider lands on Buckingham Palace roof

LONDON (R) — A naked man was arrested on the roof of Queen Elizabeth's Buckingham Palace Saturday after landing a motorised paraglider in one of the most bizarre breaches of royal security to date.

The man, who has not been identified, was first spotted over Blackfriars Bridge spanning the River Thames in central London and police tracked his progress as he flew over the West End theatreland and up the Mall towards the palace, where he circled before touching down.

Once he had landed just after daybreak the man, whose motive is not yet known, threw off his paragliding equipment and took off all his clothes. Within minutes he had been arrested by police officers who took him to Charing Cross Police Station.

"Security had been alerted," a spokesman at Buckingham Palace said. "He took off his clothes and was arrested without a struggle... there was a reduced security risk as no member of the royal family was in residence at the time."

One official said the queen's corps, which were being exer-

cised, watched the man's exploit with bewilderment.

It was not clear whether the man had undertaken the stunt in freezing cold weather for a bet, a protest or as a prank for the tabloid newspapers.

"He managed to stay up there for about five minutes and raised his arms in a sort of victory salute. It's quite possible he was doing it for a bet," said one eyewitness, who reported that at one point the interloper shouted abuse at the police.

Foreign tourists waiting to watch the famous changing of the guard ceremony were mostly amused. "The weirdies are all over," was the verdict of retired accountant Thomas Ford, 66, from Daytona Beach, Florida.

Britain's racy tabloid newspapers, always eager to get pictures of such bizarre exploits were desperately trying to find out if the man had organised for his feat to be photographed by a friend.

Another man grabbed the media spotlight in a similar way on Nov. 6 last year in Las Vegas when he dropped onto a boxing ring in a world heavyweight title fight.

Firebomb causes Belfast store blaze

BELFAST (Agencies) — An incendiary device exploded at large store in the centre of Belfast early Saturday, causing a fire that was later extinguished, local police said.

A spokesman said a firebomb had been placed in Woolworth's in the Cornmarket causing fire to break out at about 12:30 a.m. (0030 GMT).

The blaze was later extinguished by emergency services. Police said the fire had been restricted to the first floor, where although the sprinkler system had been effective it had left considerable water damage.

A spokesman said owners of other stores in the city centre had been asked to check their premises for incendiary devices.

The firebomb attack is the latest in a concerted campaign, thought "by police to be the work of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), against commercial premises throughout the province that began two days after Christmas.

Britain's top official in Northern Ireland said Friday Sinn Fein has "a very few weeks" to respond to the British-Irish framework for peace in the province.

Pakistan observes strike in solidarity with Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Life came to a standstill across Pakistan Saturday in a shutdown to demonstrate solidarity with Muslim Kashmiris campaigning against Indian rule in their part of the disputed region.

On the other side of the border, meanwhile, thousands of Indians began to stage a march in protest at what they said was Pakistan's covert support for Muslim separatists in Indian-ruled Kashmir.

All Pakistani government departments, commercial banks, private businesses, markets and shops and even restaurants were closed, and a day was declared a public holiday.

Public transport was also off the road throughout the country and a complete strike was also being observed in the Pakistan-controlled northern third of the divided Kashmir state, officials said.

"Nothing can stop the Kashmiris from gaining their right to self-determination," Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said in a message.

"Let there be no doubt or mistake that Pakistan will continue to lend its firm moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmir cause," she said.

Rallies were planned later in the day at different places by both ruling and opposition parties to express support for the Kashmiri movement, in a display of national unity over the issue.

Ms. Bhutto urged the international community to get the U.N. resolutions on Kashmir implemented.

The resolutions, adopted in 1948 and 1949 following the first war between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, call for a plebiscite to enable Kashmir to choose union with either of the two countries.

India, which holds the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, says the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 was final and the U.N. resolutions are no longer relevant.

More than 8,000 people have been killed in India's only Muslim-majority state since 1989 in violence linked to a militant separatist campaign that India has been trying to quell.

In India, meanwhile, thousands of activists from the ruling Congress (I) Party began marching to the India-Pakistan border at Attari to protest Islamabad's alleged support for the separatists.

Large groups of men and women began to walk from the Sikh holy city of Amritsar nearly 30 kilometres (18 miles) from Attari, waving huge Indian flags and shouting slogans denouncing Pakistan, witnesses said.

Hundreds of others were packed in buses and trucks which moved slowly along with

the marchers. The organisers said the number of protestors was expected to swell to more than 50,000 by the time they reached the fortified border.

Banners and hand-written placards carried by the marchers, a vast majority of them Sikhs, accused Pakistan of backing the violent separatist campaign.

A loudhailer near the border, sealed and guarded by hundreds of Indian Border Guards, blared patriotic songs. A police officer said the marchers would not be allowed to breach a gate which divides India and Pakistan.

Indian security forces put up steel barricades and coiled barbed wire about 180 metres from the frontier to stop the members of the Youth Congress from crossing over to Pakistan.

"At no cost will anyone be allowed to go up to the gate," said B. Shukla, a superintendent of police in the northern state of Punjab, where Attari is located.

But Maninder Singh Bitta, a Sikh who heads the Youth Congress, warned in Amritsar that the marchers would smash through the barricades "if the police do not cooperate." He did not elaborate.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming and training Muslim guerrillas in Kashmir. Pakistan denies the charge and



Schneider takes slalom with supreme second leg

SIERRA NEVADA, Spain (R) — Switzerland's Vreni Schneider showed her class with a blistering second leg to win a women's slalom Saturday.

Showing brilliant control down a steep and difficult course, she finished almost a second and a half ahead of her nearest rival, Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg.

"This was one of the best races of my career," said a delighted Schneider, celebrating her 49th World Cup victory.

Schneider, who was visibly upset this week by the death of her friend Ulrike Maier in last Saturday's downhill in Germany, had turned in a modest first leg performance, 1.93 seconds and in 11th place behind surprise leader Roberta Serra of Italy.

But she charged down the second leg in just 48.88 seconds, well ahead of the next fastest time of 50.38 turned in by Wiberg.

"I think I had too much respect for the course in the

first leg, it looked like it was difficult," said Schneider.

"But when I saw how much faster the others had gone I was sure I could make up the difference on the second leg."

Schneider, 29, did a combined time of one minute 41.30 seconds, to Wiberg's 1:42.66 and 1:42.70 by Deborah Compagnon of Italy.

Wiberg stays top of the overall standings on 1,209 points after claiming victory in the combined event following her 10th place finish in Wednesday's downhill here. Schneider, second in the combined, is on 1,190 points.

Action resumes on Sunday with a super-G event.

The Italians had looked like dominating Saturday's race after the first leg, with Compagnoni well poised with a joint second fastest time.

Scarra, ranked only 17th in the slalom standings before Saturday, had shaken the favourites with a courageous first leg that left her almost a second ahead of her nearest rivals.

Hiding Maradona barred from leaving Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Soccer star Diego Maradona, in hiding after firing an air rifle at reporters, was barred from leaving Argentina until the courts rule on charges filed by his victims, a judge has said.

"He cannot leave the country," Judge Francisco Lilo, in charge of the case, told Reuters. "He must settle his judicial situation first."

The diminutive captain of Argentina's national side and his family fled their country home in a pick-up truck under cover of darkness early Thursday, escaping a siege by a press corps at war with him over the air gun shots.

His lawyers would not say where he was but assured reporters that he would show up for questioning when needed.

Judge Lilo said he had summoned Maradona to appear Tuesday before his court in Mercedes, 40 kilometres northwest of Buenos Aires.

Maradona, 33, lost his temper and started firing pellets from an air gun at journalists standing at the wrought-iron gates of his country home this week after he was sacked by his club, Newell's Old Boys, for repeatedly missing practice sessions.

Police raided his five-acre residence after the incident but found no trace of the gun, which had been seen repeatedly in television footage from the scene.

The attack earned Maradona his second fingerprinting since he was briefly held on drug charges following a raid



A cameraman and reporter from a Buenos Aires television station are sprayed with water Wednesday at the home of soccer star Diego Maradona. Journalists who were hoping to interview Maradona after he quit his club said that the Argentine soccer star and five other men fired at them with air-powered pellet guns (AFP photo)

on a Buenos Aires apartment in 1991.

The main Buenos Aires dailies have described Maradona as virtually deranged and Argentina's most influential journalist, Bernardo Neustadt, has warned him that he will not get off lightly after taking on the local press.

Judge Lilo said Maradona, who threatened at one point to switch from the air gun to real bullets, would not be arrested because the charges — bodily harm and minor injuries — carry a maximum two-year prison sentence which is not usually enforceable.

Maradona's career has been in decline since the 1990 World Cup in Italy. He failed a routine dope test for cocaine while playing for Napoli in March 1991 and was banned

for 15 months by FIFA, world soccer's governing body.

He returned to Argentina, declared he had retired and entered a treatment programme.

He came out of retirement in Spain with Sevilla last season but was sacked in June and returned again to Argentina.

After a four-month break followed by an intense slimming and fitness programme, Maradona signed with Newell's Old Boys in October, then inspired Argentina to victory over Australia in a critical World Cup playoff.

Maradona said before his clash with reporters that he planned to continue playing despite having been fired, and looked forward to the World Cup in the United States later this year.

Graf to face Navratilova in final of Pan Pacific Open

TOKYO (R) — Top seeds Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova cruised to straight-set wins Saturday to set up a showdown in the final of the \$750,000 Toray Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament in Tokyo.

World number one Graf of Germany, fresh from victory in last week's Australian Open, wasted little time and effort in brushing aside unseeded Kristie Boogert of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-2 in 55 minutes.

The second-seeded Navratilova of the United States inched a step closer to retaining her title and clinching her first tournament of her final season by outsmarting sixth seed Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland 6-2, 6-3.

Graf will be looking to avenge her loss to Navratilova in last year's semi-final on the fast carpet surface at the Tokyo metropolitan gymnasium.

"It's a surface that suits us both, so we'll see who's going to be better tomorrow. But

physically I'm definitely fit for it, don't worry," said Graf, who with a win will balance the scales to nine wins apiece with Navratilova.

Defending champion Navratilova said she would play a careful game against the seed otherwise "I'll get blown off the court."

Graf, a two-time winner here, was barely stretched by Boogert, ranked 90th in the world. She served and returned superbly to deny Boogert her only break point in the last game of the final set.

"She didn't have much chance to return my serve and I responded very well on her serve. So I was very satisfied," the 24-year-old German said.

Navratilova was in devastating form during her lopsided match of contrasting styles. The American unleashed her penetrating serve laced with topspin and constantly stormed to the net, while the Bulgarian-born Maleeva-Fragniere hugged the baseline and desperately tried to whip shots past

the 37-year-old at the net.

Navratilova, appearing in her first tournament since her first-round loss to Martina Hingis in November, showed mercy to Maleeva-Fragniere, who will retire from tennis next week's Asia Open.

She took Maleeva-Fragniere in the first, third and seventh games of the first set and the seventh game of the final set, while losing only one service game.

With the win, Navratilova now has a 12-3 career record over Maleeva-Fragniere and got revenge for a loss in the final of last year's European Indoors in Zurich.

"She played one of her best matches against me. I needed just a little opportunity to get back into the match, but she didn't give it to me," said Maleeva-Fragniere.

Navratilova, with her partner Manon Bollegraf of the Netherlands, has also reached the doubles final.

Chang, Reneberg struggle into semifinals of San Jose Open

SAN JOSE, California (R) — Americans Michael Chang and Richey Reneberg, the top two seeds, struggled to three-set victories, before advancing to the semifinals of the \$288,750 San Jose Open men's tennis tournament late Friday.

Chang, the top seed and the world's ninth-ranked player, survived an upset bid by hard-hitting Jean-Philippe Fleurian, before beating the unseeded Frenchman, 6-7 (6-8) 6-1 6-3 in two hours, 53 minutes. Meanwhile, the second-seeded Reneberg, overcame an ailing shoulder, to rally past compatriot and rookie pro Brian Macphie, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

In other quarterfinal results, sixth-seed Rocco Furlan of Italy, ousted American Jeff Tarango 1-6, 6-1, 7-5, and fifth-seed Karsten Braasch of Germany stopped American Bryan Shelton, 6-4, 6-4.

In the semifinals, Chang will play Braasch, while Reneberg faces Furlan.

"It was a pretty up-and-down match," said Chang, who served nine aces and one double fault. "I got off to another slow start, but really thought I had a pretty good chance to win in straight sets, when I went up 5-3."

"It seems whenever I was ahead, he just seemed to hit winners," added Chang, a two-time winner here. "It was a

little frustrating."

"In the third set, I kind of played in between I basically just waited for him to miss. He's a great player and today was just a grind, basically."

After rallying from a 3-0 deficit, Chang wasted two set points at 5-3 and two more at 6-5.

At 6-6 in the tiebreaker, Chang double-faulted and followed, by slamming a forehand service return long to drop the one-hour, 25-minute opener.

Chang, regrouped in the next two sets, however. In the third, he built a 4-1 advantage

before Fleurian rallied.

The 28-year-old Frenchman held a game point to level the match at 4-4. But Chang went up 3-3, when he ripped a forehand service return winner of his sixth break point, thus ending a grueling 16-point game. He then served out the match.

Reneberg dismissed the seriousness of the tendinitis in the rotator cuff.

"It hurts when I serve, but it's ok," he said. "I don't win that many points on my serve anyway," said the 30th-ranked player.

Armenia agrees to Olympic truce but Bosnia doubtful

LILLEHAMMER (R) — Armenia has agreed to observe an Olympic truce from Saturday until the Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games and to work to end the conflict over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said.

The IOC said there had been no word from Azerbaijan, which says Armenian troops are occupying parts of its territory as part of the battle for control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Thousands of people have died in six years of fighting over the mountainous enclave which is inside Azerbaijan but populated mainly by ethnic Armenians.

Armenia, which backs the Karabakh Armenians, says it has no troops in Azerbaijan. Both countries are on the volatile southern rim of the former Soviet Union.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan informed IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch that Armenia would respect the Olympic truce from Saturday to March 6, a week after the Lillehammer games end, the IOC said. Russia has been trying, so far unsuccessfully, to broker a separate truce in the region.

The Olympic truce was proposed in a U.N. resolution last year and is supposed to apply to all conflict zones.

The IOC wrote to all belligerents in all the world's war zones urging them to observe the truce. In particular, the IOC has been keen to secure a ceasefire in Bosnia because the Winter Olympics were staged there in the capital Sarajevo a decade ago.

But despite a reminder from Samaranch a week ago, the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims have yet to say whether they will respect the truce resolution. Fighting continued unabated in and around Sarajevo Saturday (see page 8).

Gustafsson beats Volkov, meets Bruguera in final

DUBAI (R) — Magnus Gustafsson, his concentration enhanced by transcendental meditation, blasted Alexander Volkov aside 6-2, 6-2 to reach the final of the \$1 million Dubai Open Saturday.

The fourth-seeded Swede will meet number one seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain, who won the other semifinal 6-2, 6-1 against South African Wayne Ferreira, in Sunday's final.

Gustafsson, who has been practising meditation for two months, was in complete command right from the start and Volkov had no answer to his powerful serves and cross court

shots.

He broke the Russian in the opening game, then again for a 3-1 lead, going on to take the first set 6-2 when Volkov failed to capitalise on four break points while trailing 2-5.

"I feel full of energy these days and meditation twice a day for 20 minutes helps me concentrate much better," Gustafsson, ranked twelfth in the world, said.

"I kept attacking his backhand and that tactic forced him to make unforced errors. For Volkov it was one of those days when he just failed to lift his game."



Hassiba Boulmerka of Algeria raises her arms at the finish line of the women's mile at the Millrose Games on Friday. Boulmerka won in 4:30.01 (AFP photo)

IOC says let Harding skate

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — The U.S. Figure Skating Association was expected to decide late Saturday if it will recommend a disciplinary hearing for Tonya Harding for her alleged role in the attack on Olympic rival Nancy Kerrigan.

But the embattled Harding, who has not been charged in the attack, Friday received a boost from a prominent member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) who is already in Lillehammer, Norway, for the start of the winter games next Saturday.

Richard Pound of Canada, a member of the IOC, said Harding should be allowed to compete in Norway unless she is convicted by a U.S. court of conspiring to attack Nancy Kerrigan or confesses a role in planning the assault.

In fact, the USOC "doesn't have much of a choice" but to

keep Harding on the team, said Pound, who sits on the 11-member IOC executive board.

"Unless you have got compelling evidence, such as a confession or a conviction, you don't have a basis on which to overturn the results," of the U.S. Figure Skating championships. "It would be very risky in terms of (denying) due process, and all of those other things (Americans) hold dear."

A five-member USFSA panel, along with a Portland sheriff's deputy, a Portland attorney who gathered evidence for the USFSA, and several others, met here for 5½ hours to pore over affidavits, FBI reports and additional documents.

That judgement will be passed along to USFSA President Claire Ferguson, who may take action against Harding — call for a disciplinary hearing or

suspend Harding's USFSA membership — or simply inform the USOC and let it make its own decision.

It is unclear whether a suspension of Harding, pending the completion of the appeal process, would be enough to keep her off the team.

Harding and her attorneys snubbed a request by the panel to appear Friday.

Harding has not been charged with any crime in a case that has already brought a guilty plea from her ex-husband and the arrests of three other men.

Anita DeFranz, the lone U.S. member on the IOC, said the group probably would not seek to bar Harding from the Olympics.

"The IOC has the final authority during the games so if it (the Harding controversy) continues, that's a possibility, but I think that's very unlikely," she said.

Norwegians to reveal Europe's best-kept secret

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — Seventy years after the first winter games were staged in Chamonix, the 17th Winter Olympics will start in one week in this small Norwegian town.

Yet the smart money was on Sofia when the games awarded in 1988.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch was supposed to have promised Sofia the games as a reward for East Bloc countries going to Seoul's summer Olympics for the first boycott-free games since 1972.

But the Bulgarians pushed too hard and the polite, friendly Norwegians, who were making their second bid, were seen as the ideal compromise to Anchorage and Ostensund.

The Alaskans had money but no tradition. The Swedes were unable to convince IOC members they could shuttle the Olympic cast between Osterund and are without a hitch.

Lillehammer is staging the games only two years after Albertville, France, because the IOC — and the television company accountants —

wanted to put winter sports on a different cycle to the summer show.

The environment-friendly Norwegians, who fine themselves whenever they cut down a fir tree too many, expect to lose money as anticipated revenues are substantially lower than forecast costs of seven billion kroner (\$959 million).

It is not clear how much they will lose but they see it as a worthwhile investment in improving train services, laying new telephone lines, building new stadia and attracting more tourists.

The tourist slogan describes Norway as Europe's best-kept secret and Lillehammer, the world's only town with a skier on its coat of arms, aims to strip away the veil of secrecy for as many foreigners as possible.

At least the Norwegians have been frank about the expected losses. French taxpayers were left with a 280 million franc (\$48 million) bill after the Albertville Games which the organisers had insisted would pay for them-

No Palestinian delegation at Winter Olympic Games

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (R) — Norwegian hopes that the Palestinian flag would be shown for the first time at an Olympics during the winter games starting Feb. 12 were dashed Friday.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) Director General Francois Carrard told a news conference he did not expect a delegation from the Palestinian Olympic Committee, which was granted provisional membership of the IOC last September.

"There are no Palestinian athletes involved to my knowledge so I don't think there will be a delegation as such," he said.

Lillehammer organisers said last December they hoped the Palestinians would send a token delegation and perhaps show their flag at the opening ceremony even though they have no winter sports athletes.

Carrard also said Cambodia had been granted provisional IOC membership, bringing the total number of nations in the organisation to 195.

Alberville, because competitions were held in so many scattered sites, with all events within a 58-kilometre radius, hopes to capture the Olympic

spirit.

"We especially want visitors to see exciting competitions and to enjoy themselves," said organising committee chairman Gerhard Heiberg.

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WITH OMAR SHARIF & YAMIN HUSSEIN
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WHO'S GOT WHAT?

East-West vulnerable. South deals.		West led the king of spades and declarer took time out to see if there was anything he could do to avoid defeat, if the diamond finesse were to lose. The only chance was to try to convince the defenders they did not have two club tricks coming to them.	
NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ A 8 6 5	♠ 10 4 3 2	♠ 10 4 3 2	♠ 10 4 3 2
♥ Q J 10 9 4	♥ 7 6	♥ 7 6	♥ 7 6
♦ 6 4	♦ 8 7 2	♦ 8 7 2	♦ 8 7 2
♣ 3 5	♣ A 6 7 6	♣ A 6 7 6	♣ A 6 7 6

The bidding: South 1NT, North 2♣, East 2♥, South 2NT, North 3♥, East 3♠, South 4♥.

Opening lead: King of ♠. Here's another example of how a shrewd declarer can benefit from the defenders' inability to see each other's holdings. Only an expert in the West chair would have evaluated the bid.

North's jump to four hearts was, perhaps, a little aggressive. However, even though South had a minimum 16 points, the contract depended on no more than a finesse.

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Ahmad Zaki in

The Lady's Chauffeur

(Arabic)

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CONCORD

CONCORD '1'

FALLING DOWN

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD '2'

ROBIN HOOD

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran interior minister gets bigger role

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's interior minister has been given greater powers over internal security, Iranian radio reported on Saturday. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had made the minister, Ali Akbar Mohtashami Razi, his deputy with responsibility for police and security. The move aimed to give the interior minister greater power in establishing the people's security and welfare. On Tuesday a man fired five shots while President Akbar Rafsanjani was giving a public speech in Tehran. Iranian officials said it was a plot to kill Mr. Rafsanjani. The last two weeks also saw rioting and gun battles in the southern town of Zahedan between security personnel and minority Sunni Muslims, according to local residents, as well as the killing of four bus passengers by bandits in the same area.

India test-fires surface-to-air missile

NEW DELHI (AP) — Ignoring pressure from Western countries to scrap its missile programme, India on Friday test fired its latest long-range surface-to-air missile, a news agency reported. The missile named Akash, the Hindi word for sky, was successfully fired at the Chandipur test range in the eastern coastal state of Orissa, the Defence Ministry said. The 650-kilogramme missile is fitted with multiple warheads, Press Trust of India news agency said quoting a Defence Ministry statement. The successful firing of Akash puts India's missile technology on par with the United States, Russia and France, United News of India news agency said. Akash is part of a \$285 million programme to develop medium and long-range air defence and surface-to-surface ballistic missiles. India has been enhancing its military power through its missile programme, fueling concern among Western countries over its ability to conduct nuclear war against neighbouring Pakistan, which also has nuclear capability.

Brown's chief accuser cries 'coverup'

MIAMI (AP) — Commerce Secretary Ron Brown's chief accuser claimed Friday that grand jurors investigating the cabinet official were not allowed to vote on an indictment, and may not have seen his bank records. The Justice Department exonerated Mr. Brown this week of accusations he secretly accepted \$700,000 from the Vietnamese government to help lift the U.S. trade embargo. President Bill Clinton announced the end of the embargo Thursday. Binh T. Ly, a Vietnamese-American businessman who first went public with the bribery charge, and testified before the Miami grand jury, called Friday for Mr. Brown's resignation and appointment of a special prosecutor. "Without an independent counsel, the investigation was a mere formality for a coverup by the Clinton administration," Mr. Ly said. The decision to drop the Brown investigation was made by justice, not the grand jury, which never voted on an indictment, he claimed.

Lagos court orders arrest of anti-drugs agents

LAGOS (R) — A Nigerian court has ordered the arrest of nine anti-narcotics agents in connection with the disappearance of part of a major drug haul from the agency, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) said. Judge Funmilayo Oki-Olopake said the officials of the National Drug Law enforcement agency (NDLEA) must explain the loss of 12 of the 649 sachets of heroin allegedly imported into Nigeria by businessman Joe Brown Akubueze, NAN reported. Mr. Oki-Olopake did not give the names of the officials in court. The court is trying Mr. Akubueze, who has pleaded not guilty to six charges including conspiracy to import the drugs. The government, which has declared a war on corruption, was embarrassed by the disappearance of the drugs while in the care of the NDLEA, formed in 1990 to combat drugs trafficking.

'Agents ready to sell phantom sub secrets'

STOCKHOLM (AP) — For more than a decade Sweden has been seeking proof of whether the Soviet — and now Russian — navy was sending submarines into Swedish coastal waters, and why. Swedish radio reported Friday that Russian intelligence officers are finally providing the answers — for cash. The radio quoted naval sources as saying Russian intelligence officers had sold information about a Russian submarine spying unit based at Primorsk, near the Russian naval base of Kaliningrad. The Swedish military has been told that the Primorsk unit uses the Swedish archipelago as its playground for test training exercises, the radio report said. The Swedish military is taking the information seriously, said the report. There was no official government comment.

Kuwait women used to bust arms hideouts

KUWAIT (R) — Women have joined a Kuwaiti police hunt for illegal weapons to prevent suspects using conservative traditions to foil raids, a newspaper reported on Saturday. Colonel Abdul Hameed Al Awadi, commander of a special force that hunts for the illicit guns from the Gulf war, said police had often been kept waiting outside houses on the pretext of the men needing time to remove their women inside from public view, the English-language Arab Times reported. The men had used the time to hide their guns. "To overcome such difficulties the force decided to employ women to assist in searching houses, especially when females are involved," the newspaper quoted Mr. Awadi as saying.

Palestinian police get Greek help

ATHENS (AFP) — The Palestinian police awaiting deployment in Jericho and Gaza under the autonomy accord will wear navy blue uniforms and drive trucks supplied by Greece, Palestinian officials said here. "We will take the navy blue uniforms, not the green ones which do not suit our future policemen," Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in Athens, told AFP. He spoke after a PLO delegation on Thursday ended a one-week visit to Greece to consider offers of uniforms, trucks and old helicopters from the Greek army. "The trucks are useful. We do not need helicopters at this stage," he added. The Greek Defence Ministry said Greece would make the contribution to help towards implementing the September accord which calls for limited Palestinian self-rule starting in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The PLO delegation — which included military officers, a pilot and an engineer — toured four bases to look at old Greek army equipment. "The Greek offer is very generous and we are grateful," Mr. Abdullah said. The Palestinians turned down six old U.S.-made Sioux CH-13 helicopters, and two 25-year-old Cessna U-17A reconnaissance planes. Greek sources said that the PLO asked for more recent planes. Old bulldozers and British-type helmets were also turned down.

Arab Maghreb Union postpones summit

TUNIS (R) — Five North African countries decided to postpone a summit of their leaders aimed at brooding the economic unification of their countries, an official statement said on Friday. The council of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) grouping leaders of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Mauritania was expected to be held at the end of this week in Tunisia, but officials said it was agreed to postpone it for a "short period." Said Ben Mustapha, Tunisian junior minister for foreign affairs, said after a two-day meeting of the AMU foreign ministers that the summit was postponed for "scheduling" reasons. He said Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his colleagues would set a new date after further consultations. Diplomats said one of the reasons for the postponement was Mauritania's municipal elections.



MOSQUE ATTACK: The body of a 15-year-old boy lies on the ground after he was killed in an attack on a mosque in Khartoum, Sudan, Friday (see story on page one). Reports of the death toll ranged between 13 and 50. At least five gunmen were involved, including foreigners, according to official statements from the Ministry of Interior (AFP photo)

Syria says Israel is stalling

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said no progress had been made at two weeks of Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington and on Saturday accused the Jewish state of stalling.

Syrian officials said Israel was demanding higher-level secret talks with Damascus while saying nothing about pulling out of the occupied Golan Heights.

The talks resumed on Jan. 24 after a four-month break and were adjourned on Thursday until Feb. 15. The U.S. State Department said this was after consultation with the parties, but Syrian officials said it was at Israel's request.

Negotiations involve the Jewish state, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

"The break in the talks, which was made at Israel's request, illustrates more of Israel's manoeuvres," said one Syrian official, adding that the Arab delegations had decided to stay in Washington.

Syrian officials said no progress was made in the past two weeks.

"Either Israel submits to the will of the U.N. resolutions calling for its full withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands or it should bear the full responsibility of wasting a unique opportunity for peace," one Syrian official said.

The officials condemned Israel's approval on Thursday to expand settlements in the Golan Heights and said the action "showed Israel did not want to make peace."

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad said after talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva last month that Syria was ready for normal ties with Israel as part of a comprehensive peace settlement.

Syria demands Israel return the Golan Heights seized in the 1967 war. Israel has said it is prepared to withdraw at least in part but will not discuss how far until Damascus agrees to "full peace" including embassies, open borders and trade.

The Syrian officials said Israel was now demanding the two sides hold secret talks and

upgrade the level of negotiations, now held at ambassadorial level.

"Israel resumed (talks) to play the tune of secret negotiations, as if what could be said in secret could not be said in public."

"It also demanded contacts at a higher level while not uttering any word about full withdrawal from the Golan," the Syrian official said.

He added: "A vivid example of the failure of secret talks is the outcome of the Oslo negotiations between the PLO and Israel as both parties were unable to implement their agreement on the ground."

Referring to Israel's approval to expand two settlements in the Golan and its call for a referendum on the fate of the area, he said:

"Israel has reactivated its settlement policy in a clear provocation to Syria... it also started to market its intention to conduct a referendum on the Golan as if international law allows her to do so."

Perry backs close Russian ties

MUNICH (Agencies) — The United States has led the faltering North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance out of a dangerous post-cold war drift, but the West must press ahead rapidly to cement ties with its former Soviet enemies, new U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said Saturday.

"It's one thing to agree in principle and another thing to do it," Mr. Perry said of last month's NATO summit agreement to offer a "Partnership for Peace" to Russia and other budding East European democracies which would stop short of alliance membership or security guarantees.

He spoke to reporters en route from Washington a day after he was sworn in to replace former Defence Minister Les Aspin. Mr. Perry flew to Munich to attend a two-day annual security meeting of European political leaders.

Mr. Perry said he would stress in a major address to the conference on Sunday that NATO must immediately begin doing "brick-by-brick" work to start joint military exercises and other links between the alliance and the East this year.

He said he would call "for vigorous concrete actions by NATO to implement it, and implement it soon."

The Washington Post reported Saturday that the Clinton administration is shifting

attention from Russia's domestic problems to its troubled relations with neighbouring states.

Quoting senior officials it did not identify, the paper said that President Clinton, in a meeting Monday with top foreign policy advisers, discussed the need to persuade Russia to withdraw troops from countries where governments reject their presence.

Those countries include Estonia, Latvia, and former Soviet republics to the south, according to the Post.

The paper said that the president and his advisers reached what one official called a "firm consensus" to support Ukraine's efforts to boost a sagging economy and end a dispute with Russia over Ukraine's possession of Soviet-era nuclear arms.

Mr. Clinton has decided to double the proposed aid to Ukraine from \$150 million announced during the president's stop in Kiev last month to more than \$300 million, the newspaper said.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl warned Russians Saturday not to adopt an imperialist trust among their neighbours without thought of creating spheres of influence or interest.

But Mr. Kohl said the NATO must take seriously

Russian fears of encirclement and isolation.

"Therefore NATO seeks to develop security cooperation with Russia and Ukraine, leading to a new relationship, a real and stable partnership," he told the opening of conference of some 200 Western defence and security specialists.

"In return, however, we expect Russia to continue a foreign policy marked by constructive participation in solving international problems," Mr. Kohl said.

"The European guidelines established since the conclusion of the Helsinki Final Act, especially unqualified respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, must be adhered to unequivocally."

"Above all Russia must foster trust, particularly among its neighbours, through its own action, thoughts of creating spheres of influence or interest would not be compatible with this," the chancellor told the 31st conference on security policy in Munich.

The leader of Russia's communists said Friday that the recent cabinet shuffle did not unsettle enough reformers and that more must go if the country is to avoid collapse.

Gennady Zyuganov, head of the Russian Communist Party, said the government has not abandoned "shock therapy," despite last month's shakeup.

Egypt starts counting holders of its papers living in Jordan

By Wafa Amr
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Egyptian embassy in Amman has started counting the number of Palestinian holders of the Egyptian travel documents residing in Jordan who have fled the occupied territories after the 1967 war, and who wish to return home, Arab diplomatic sources said on Saturday.

Sources at the Egyptian embassy said persons displaced in the 1967 war who wish to return to the occupied Palestinian territories were asked to fill a one-page application in order to enable the Cairo government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to compile the total number of displaced persons wishing to return.

Palestinians from the Gaza Strip have been issued Egyptian documents to facilitate their movement. Unlike West Bank residents, they were not eligible to acquire Jordanian passports. The Gaza Strip was under Egyptian control until 1967.

Egyptian diplomats said the census, which already started in Egypt itself, was aimed at facilitating the work of a four-party committee comprised of Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the PLO that should meet to discuss the return of displaced Palestinians and their economic needs.

The committee, mentioned in the September PLO-Israel accord, has not been formed yet and no date has been set for it to convene.

Egypt and Jordan, which host large numbers of displaced Palestinians, as well as the PLO are contemplating holding a meeting at the ministerial level to coordinate positions prior to a meeting including Israel.

The Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord states that displaced persons have the right to return.

Until Palestinian refugees of 1948, displaced persons will not be compensated if they wish to remain in their countries of residence. According to United Nations Resolution 194, Palestinians who fled their homes during and after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war have the right to choose between compensation and the right of return.

The PLO-Israel accord postpones the issue of refugees to the final status negotiations. PLO officials estimate the number of displaced Palestinians, holders of Egyptian travel documents and residing in Jordan at around 50,000. They said some of them have acquired two-year Jordanian passports.

Jordanian officials said no similar move to enumerate displaced Palestinians living in Jordan has been taken yet by the Kingdom. They said Jordan's estimates of the total number of refugees and displaced Palestinians are at 1.7 million, 670,000 of whom are 1967 displaced persons.

The officials said the issue would be discussed in a meeting of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee on refugees and displaced persons. The Refugees Committee has not met since its formation. However, the issue of refugees has been discussed in multi-lateral negotiations.

Some Jordanians of Palestinian origin have expressed concern over the possibility that they might have to give up their Jordanian passport if they choose to return and live in the occupied territories. Jordanian officials said displaced Palestinians would have the choice, but would not be forced to return. Once they choose to return, they have to drop their Jordanian nationality, a senior Jordanian official said.

PLO officials said Israel would allow Palestinians in the self-rule areas to carry Palestinian travel documents, but not passports. This would leave Palestinians who choose to return from Jordan without a passport, making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to travel. Jordan has been the only Arab country to issue Palestinians passports.

Hope for Afghan truce despite unabated violence

KABUL (AFP) — A senior Afghan Foreign Ministry official expressed hope Saturday for an end to fighting in Kabul between forces for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani, despite continued hostilities including rocket-fire on the Red Cross headquarters.

The official said the efforts of a peace team headed by independent Mujahideen commander Jallaluddin Haqqani were continuing.

"We are very hopeful for a ceasefire," said the Foreign Ministry official.

"The Haqqani mission is trying to establish a long-lasting solution," he added.

The official, who declined to be named, said the peace delegation had decided not to issue a statement to the press until they had achieved concrete results.

Kabul was mainly quiet Saturday following serious fighting late Friday afternoon when Rabbani rivals were beaten back as they attempted to attack the state bus station near the Qalab Mahmud Khan bridge.

However the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

was struck by an incoming long-range rocket early Saturday, just as the 14-strong Red Cross staff were leaving after their morning meeting.

Shrapnel from the explosion tore a gaping hole in the roof and wounded three Afghan personnel, one seriously. He was rushed to hospital with a broken leg.

"This can happen anywhere in Kabul," said Red Cross chief Peter Stocker. "We will not allow the incident to affect our normal humanitarian work in and around the capital."

However, Mr. Stocker said that the ICRC would beef up security measures to ensure the safety of its staff, only the lower floor of the delegation headquarters will be occupied from now on, and more sand bags will be placed around windows and open spaces for the protection of the reduced personnel there.

With both Mr. Rabbani and his rivals — former communist militiaman General Abdul Rashid Dostum and his ally Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar — taking hardline stances, negotiations for a lasting peace in Afghanistan could be lengthy.

COLUMN

Briton living in a tent charged with housebreaking

SINGAPORE (AFP) — A 24-year-old Briton, Emmanuel Nyarko Yankson, who entered Singapore as a tourist and overstayed for about three years, was charged in a magistrate's court Saturday with housebreaking, a court official said. He was alleged to have committed the offence together with another person still at large. The two were said to have entered a house on Dec. 9 last year and stolen about \$1,200. No plea was recorded and Mr. Yankson, a British national, was remanded in custody until Wednesday. Police said investigations were in progress and more charges would be brought up later. Overstaying for more than 90 days carries a mandatory penalty of three strokes of the cane besides a jail term or fine. According to local press reports Mr. Yankson entered Singapore by road from Malaysia in 1991 and set up home in a forest area. He lived in two water-proof nylon tents which were well camouflaged by trees and thick undergrowth.

Soviet bigwigs wore armoured hats

MOSCOW (AP) — It turns out that Soviet leaders were even more hard-headed than the world thought. Their big fur hats were lined with steel. On Soviet holidays, members of the ruling politburo used to stand rigidly on Lenin's tomb in Red Square, watching tanks and missiles stream by in military parades. Maybe they looked so stiff because of the weight of their armoured headgear, a Russian newspaper suggested Friday. The special hats were custom made on orders from the Communist Party by a defence factory that also manufactured standard-issue army helmets, the daily Segodnya reported. The hats, called "shapki" in Russian, usually were made from the prized fur of baby lambs, Siberian muskrats or young reindeer. Metal plates hidden under the fur were meant to protect the Communist bigwigs from assassination. Segodnya said the helmet factory now is offering similar hats to Russian entrepreneurs who fear attacks from gangsters.

Russian, French defence ministers in car accident

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and his visiting French counterpart, Francois Leotard, were involved in a car accident but were unhurt. Gen. Grachev and Mr. Leotard were being driven from Moscow to visit the Taman Infantry Division outside the capital when their limousine was hit by a truck on an icy road, the ITAR-TASS News Agency said. After the accident, the two defence chiefs continued their trip in another car, viewed the elite infantry division, and returned safely to Moscow. ITAR-TASS reported. Earlier in the day, Gen. Grachev told Mr. Leotard that Russia would oppose air strikes against Serbian forces in Bosnia unless United Nations peacekeeping forces come under attack, the Interfax News Agency reported.

Trees bud, snow disappears in Alaska heat wave

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — While the nation's east coast and Midwest suffered bitter cold, Alaska has been struck by a winter heat wave producing budding tree limbs, wide expanses of green grass, dejected skiers and confusion. Stationary weather patterns elsewhere have funnelled a tropical jet stream all the way to the arctic coast, causing a string of record and near-record daily highs, National Weather Service meteorologists said. A low-pressure system off the Aleutians and a high-pressure system off southeastern Alaska and the Canadian and U.S. northwest has forced the warm weather northward, meteorologist Jeff Perry told Reuters.